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**Doug and Mary and Others**

DOUG· *and* MARY  
*and* OTHERS a book  
*by Allene Talmey*  
with woodcut portraits  
*by Bertrand Zadig*

Published by Macy - Masius  
New York 1927

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by *Allene Talmey*  
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Published by Macy-Masius  
1907

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*Will H. Hays*

THE movies needed face, back in 1922. Relaxed into a formless, fleshy mass, the body of the business was in disastrous shape. To top the fat muscles, the lean face of that Presbyterian Republican, Will Harrison Hays, was attached. It was an incongruous posture then, resembling most of all those cartoons of a human head gummed to the Rabelaisian body of a beast. Since 1922, however, Will Hays has so massaged that body that it now possesses some of the lean dignity of the face.

A bantamweight of a man, Will Hays has an office on Fifth Avenue, a quiet mulberry room with a desk extravagantly large. With the exception of that desk and his ears, everything about him is small. The ears are famous in the movies. Not matching, the right one spreads with a tendency futuristic and triangular, while the left has a conservative roundness. His collars, three inches high, starched and shining, hit him in the chin.

It is, of course, perfectly ridiculous for a man of such insignificant stature to have so much magnetism. So concentrated is his vibrancy that he has the effect of having just been tightened up by a mechanic. When he talks, this pull shows most strongly, calling

## *Doug and Mary and*

out a definite emotional reaction. He begins talking without impetus, lathering himself into emotion. He breaks into a rash of rhetoric. He is jam full of quotations, of references to Plato, Juvenal, the Cynic, Shakespeare, Milton.

Loving long, rounded sentences, he impresses his audiences by fondling such phrases as "the movies are the silent agencies of understanding"; "the manhood and womanhood of America are sound and wholesome"; "the great press to which we look as an elder brother"; and "the ample shaded villages and hamlets where dwell, after all, the majority of our citizenry". His ever unwearied words are "service", "opportunity" and "custodian".

Will Hays has such simplicity of life that there pricks into it only these minor features. He does not smoke. He does not drink. He confines his theater attendance to musical comedies and farces. He rarely reads anything with much weight. He loves motoring, and he is a speeder on the open road.

It was this man who had to make the face and figure of the movies coördinate, had to supply a voice for the movies. To do both of these meant that he had to be the politician.

## Will H. Hays

At being a politician Will H. Hays is a genius. All his adult life he has spent in politics, stepping in as a lawyer at twenty-one, mounting at twenty-five to the chairmanship of his county and then of his state, Indiana. By his thirty-eighth year he had palmed the national chairmanship of the Republican Party.

During that period of exercising all his contacts, Hays grew to know thoroughly the reactions of the American public. To him the popular mind is primer reading, easy as Braille to the blind. But, most important of all, he knows how to organize that mind to his purpose. To reach that stage of control he spent about three hundred and fifty days a year, for four or five years, traveling all over the country. His home was the Pullman car. Everywhere the Pullman porters knew him, partly because he needed so much service, and partly because he told them homely anecdotes with morals about "picking up stones during rest hours". Most of his stories he laid in Sullivan, Ind., the Hays home town to which his loyalty is so intense that he mentions it in practically all conversations and speeches.

## *Doug and Mary and*

Through that traveling he screwed in tightly the bolts that held together his political machinery when it came time to suction Warren Gamaliel Harding into the presidency. Out of those nights of Pullman car riding came Harding votes, with a president flooded into office on a fabulous majority of 7,000,000 ballots.

The success of that election quickly brought him the postmaster generalship, and then the offer to be chief of the motion picture industry at a salary hovering gently over \$100,000, with the additional privilege of keeping on with his law firm, Hay and Hays, in Sullivan, where it handles many of the railroad cases of the state.

Will Hays went into the movies. As its voice he undertook to talk at length, convincingly and amazingly emptily, restating those truths long held to be self evident. He attends innumerable luncheons, cornerstone layings; at movie openings, those swagger affairs powdered luxuriously with ermine coats, he always has an aisle seat. Off parade, Will Hays slips over constructive important matters for the movies without any echoing splash to the public. When he

## Will H. Hays

talks then his words are not long, empty. They are convincing, meaty.

He is the greatest wire puller in the country. Not that Will Hays would ever be so crude as to yank at a wire. He only twitches. Whatever is done has the finesse of a Machiavelli. All bearing down is avoided. He oils his path. The grease can is always in his pocket. Because of the years of work, smoothing his way, he can reach his destination by following any one of his planned avenues. So sure are his roads that Theodore Roosevelt wrote on his memorandum, found after his death, a note to this effect: "See Will Hays on pulling together the Republican Party".

Whatever he does, this man whose gestures have an automatic quality, is done secretly. He has trained his confidential secretary to be so secretive that she will admit only under pressure that there is such a person as Will Hays. When she does admit it, she usually has to add: "and he is telephoning long distance". For the 1920 election his telephone bills daily mounted into the thousands. These days he calls Hollywood from New York at least once a day, rings up Sullivan, Sauk

## *Doug and Mary and*

Center, Denver, Little Rock, with the same abandonment as local calls. He is known as "Telephone Bill", a name, incidentally, which he loves.

The telephone acts for him as one of his most powerful organization mediums, and it is as an organizer that Will Hays is particularly a political genius.

The Hays office, for instance, keeps a complete list of every editor in the country, with one man clipping editorial remarks. If the remarks are favorable to the movies, the editor receives a letter of appreciation, dictated and signed by Hays. If unfavorable, a friendly letter is sent pointing out the alleviating process on the evil. About 100 letters a week go out. Hays keeps flaming thereby his contact with the press. Similar lists are kept, outlined under financial, religious, educational. He can go anywhere with such aids.

Just prior to the addition of the movie face, a limb of the body had become so scrofulous that national censorship of films was threatened, the threat centering in Massachusetts. The major inner duty, the duty not mentioned in those lengthy outward speeches by

## Will H. Hays

the Face and Voice, was to stop that threat. In 1922 the question of censorship came up as a popular referendum in Massachusetts. Hays organized, just as he had done when, as National Chairman of the Republican Party, he swung Warren Harding into the Presidency. He twitched silken strings. Republican Harry Hoagland of Fort Wayne, Ind., and Charles Pettijohn, right-hand man to Tom Taggart, Democratic chief of Indiana, went into Massachusetts to organize that State right down to the grass roots. They probed into every ward. Two men traveled constantly in a Ford throughout the State, with copies of one hundred and five editorials against censorship. Every newspaper with the exception of the Boston *Globe* printed them.

Hays made censorship the dominant issue. On Election Day he got out the vote. The result was 553,173 ballots to 208,253, a majority of 344,920 against censorship. More votes were cast on the referendum than there were for or against the candidate for Governor or for the United States Senatorship. The Voice of the Movies attributed it all to

## *Doug and Mary and*

the righteous, spontaneous warning of the public against censorship.

In that matter of the 1924 tax repeal on movie admissions up to and including fifty cents, Hays again used his organizing powers, his wires. He set Henderson M. Richey, a Michigan edition of Mayor Walker, to gathering the exhibitors together for a concerted push. Then Mr. Hays talked with President Coolidge and Secretary Mellon; and, after conference with the latter, newspaper photographers took pictures of the two coming out of that side entrance of the Treasury reserved just for Secretaries of the Treasury and their intimates. The photographs were just a bit of gratuitous oil.

All this has led the motion picture industry into passionate gratitude to this man, most loquacious when most secretive in their interests. With complacent conceit the movies like their face, Presbyterian and Republican.





*Gloria Swanson*

**W**HEN Gloria Swanson lies in her golden bathtub, a tired woman of almost thirty, she must realize at sight of her golden plumbing, that she is a success. For only the successful can achieve bathrooms of black marble, hidden soft lights and basins of gold.

Undoubted movie success has come to Gloria Swanson. But her screen sparkle and gayety vanishes when off the screen, leaving her a quiet, weary person, with hair soft and dark, a husky voice, blue almond-shaped eyes, and a manner so reserved that it embarrasses her and those meeting her for the first time. Her dignity is paralyzing. It is that dignity which makes her so magnificent, and for which Hollywood can never quite forgive her.

There in Hollywood hover the ghosts, always remembering that the cool Marquise de la Falaise de Coudray came as an extra, as a flat-figured girl in a Mack Sennett bathing suit of black and white checks. Hollywood, with its disturbing memory, can still see the haughty Swanson of the days of the DeMille society pictures, a funny impossible girl in her crazy clothes, an overdressed Chicago kid whose hair was black, and hard and shiny with brilliantine. Knowing that only by

## *Doug and Mary and*

eccentricity could she compel notice, she wrapped herself in tight and violent dresses, ornaments bunched on the crag of her hips. She did not care that the elaborate fashionings of her hair were only copied by hash-house waitresses; she did not care that her satin swathings, clinging to her as sharply as a lobster shell clings to its white meat, were just further evidences of the impossibility of that Swanson girl. With her bad posture, her Illinois twang, her gamin toughness, the movie magazines posed her as the smartest dressed woman in Hollywood; and she loved it.

But Gloria Swanson is acquisitive. She began to discard the crudities which had made her the great example of movie bad taste. She reserved those satin swathings which she still loves, and wears, for only those moments in her own bedroom when the eyes of Hollywood cannot peep in. Lessons taught her how to carry herself, how to enunciate properly. Her time came at a dinner at the Park Lane Hotel, given her by officials of Paramount when she returned from Europe several years ago, bringing with her the film "Madame Sans Gene", and her new

## *Gloria Swanson*

husband, a docile nobleman with a reckless taste in spats. After the usual publicity spasms of superlatives, the daughter of Capt. Joseph Swanson, U.S.A. and the former wife of actor Wallace Beery, and of business man Somborn, stood up in front of those paunchy, bald-headed men who remembered a hard-faced Sennett bathing girl and a spit curled DeMille vamp. They saw a formal, cool woman, the Marquise de la Falaise de Coudray, magnificent in her re-creation of Gloria Swanson.

Any critical summation of the art of this woman has always been effectively stopped after the statement that she was good in "The Humming Bird" and in "Man-handled". Whether she comes forth in some ridiculous picture, in some mediocre one, or in a good one, Swanson as a personality alone has drawing power of such suction that it has by this time whirlpooled her into the fabulous position of an actress who has bought considerably into the United Artists Corporation. Into whatever phase of the business the fist of United Artists pokes, she must poke also; for she is an equal owner with Charles Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Doug-

## *Doug and Mary and*

las Fairbanks, Joseph M. Schenck and D. W. Griffith. She is not just an expensive player under contract to a producer with a United Artists releasing franchise. She is not in the same glorified wage slave position as John Barrymore, Norma and Constance Talmadge, and Buster Keaton.

This woman, who sometimes has a definite hatred for the movies, an unhappy miserable feeling that it is merely hard work, has movie business to attend to as well as acting. Of all the women in the movies, only Mary Pickford and Gloria Swanson have their own producing units. Miss Pickford has the assistance of Douglas Fairbanks. Alone Miss Swanson battles for her dollars.

Alone, she persuaded Wall Street bankers to finance her unit, Gloria Swanson, Inc., to the extent of \$1,200,000, taking as consideration her box office record and her insurance policies of several million dollars. Alone, she must make the money to pay her \$10,000 monthly living expenses. She must keep up her \$100,000 pent-house on top of the Park Chambers Hotel in New York, her Hollywood home, her \$75,000 Croton country estate. Tied to her by a monetary thread are her

## *Gloria Swanson*

four secretaries, her press agent, her vice-president, her production manager, her scenario manager. Her days are a constant series of disturbances by butlers and maids, by secretaries and camera men, by electricians, and writers and bill collectors.

Hers is a mad, chaotic organization, set into the tumultuous life of a tired, worried woman whose temperamental sympathies are fluid, running in channels dammed by her assistants. Everyone and everything influences her. She listens and weeps. She hires and fires, shoots situations that are never used, orders sets, and countermands, pays for sub-titles and throws them out the window, announces that she will not be bothered by details any more, and then insists on licking each fan mail stamp. And now, in the midst of the whirlpool of her life, brave and bewildered, is Gloria, going around faster than she ever believed possible. The waves wrap her, and she strangles in the seaweed tentacles of her octopus of troubles, her responsibilities, her enormous debts, her file of lawsuits for the non-payment of her extravagant bills.

She sees it all merely as a gag, for life to

## *Doug and Mary and*

her is merely a series of gags. Her smallest action is translated into a movie term. The prospect of her own existence, which she affectionately calls her "unnatural existence", reduces her to blubbering, to more dramatics than she expends in front of the camera. After playing with her two children, daughter Gloria, and Little Brother, her adopted son, she frequently goes off into hysterics, the burden of her wail:

"Why do I have to work and work, and not be just a mother!"

The lives of the children are never publicized, and, no matter how insistent the press agent, interviewer or photographer, Miss Swanson keeps to the resolution that they shall not be pushed into the motion picture's glare. At school the little girl whose name is Gloria Sandblom is known as the child of the Marquise de la Falaise de Coudray. When the little boy was adopted, he was given Swanson as last name. This difference of names mixed up the young friends of the children. Little Gloria explained to them that mother was the Marquise de la Falaise de Coudray because her husband was the Marquis, that she was called

## *Gloria Swanson*

Somborn because her father's name was Somborn, that Little Brother was Swanson because— And here she stumbled. Why was Little Brother Swanson?

"He hasn't any father yet," she finally said.

In the living room of the Hollywood house now rests a plasterine model of the head of young Gloria, molded by Miss Swanson. When Bryant Baker, sculptor of the heads of Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft, saw the model, he only commented:

"She makes a sucker out of me."

Modeling, however, is not the only one of her half formulated creative abilities. The intimation of artistic pangs in movie persons has a sensible habit of taking place in full view of the publicity departments, but, like the children, her immature abilities are kept out of sight. The Marquis can be exploited, shown selling a Peugeot or taking a movie test; but her poetry must not be revealed. One of the most famous magazine editors in the country has tried vainly for three years to gain permission to print some of her canny observations, done tersely in four lines of blank verse. Following verse and modeling,

## *Doug and Mary and*

she switched her aim to oil paintings in the the barn of the Croton home. As a first effort, she dug deep into raw colors, ambitiously labeling the swirling blobs "Creation of the World". Only about a dozen persons ever saw it.

For the social circle of Gloria Swanson is amazingly small. She has no desire to be glad-handed. None of her homes is a place into which friends casually drop. They are invited. Few of them belong to the movies, but all, when she lived East, came out to the country place, far enough up the Hudson to make a visit an effort. In that rambling old place, painted a soft green, the disconcerting reserve of Miss Swanson slipped off. The clothes horse disappeared, old smeared smocks were rooted out of closets, and rouge and lipstick completely abandoned. Out to a log cabin at the corner of the forty acres, she took her guests to bake potatoes and to drink beer out of bottles. No swimming pools, no tennis courts, no adjoining golf links were present to spirit friends from the simple pleasures of the place. Absurd games, spelling matches, shooting pennies, and practical jokes formed entertain-

## *Gloria Swanson*

ment. In the evenings a favorite sport consisted of cutting a number out of the telephone directory, and calling up the owner to deliver an absurd message. One of her finest conceptions, the flower of all her practical jokes, was the shipment of a car-load of newspapers to the stateroom of a friend. Newspapers jammed the room, spread into the corridors. The card bore the pleasant greeting: "Just something to read".

This adult infantilism she rescued out of the parings of the Gloria Swanson of the opulent DeMille period. In the wild and bold leap upward there was lost the quality of youth, of all naiveté. For the charming and hateful and dignified Marquise de la Falaise de Coudray is still hard-boiled.



*Mary Pickford*

MARY and Doug, driving tandem, are hitched to the same star. With resulting great financial reward, Douglas Fairbanks brought to the movies the precepts of the Y. M. C. A., glorifying physical strength. For almost twenty years Mary has delightedly demonstrated the charm of keeping one's skirts up and one's hair down. The screen has had athletes and romantic actors, has had its child impersonators; but only in Fairbanks has romance been so completely welded to athlete, only in Pickford has childhood eternally flourished.

Out of the thrilling grace of a balcony jump, out of a zooming slide down wind-blown sails, Douglas Fairbanks built himself his throne. He has showmanship, æsthetics, and knowledge. And by his side sits Little Mary. Both wear halos, cut for them by a devoted public, halos a trifle binding, a fraction cocked, which Douglas industriously keeps shining brightly.

To preserve that glitter, Fairbanks exercises several wise gestures. Mary does nothing. She is sanity. Hers is a soft low snicker of sense in the midst of treble hysteria. In a business where all, including her

## *Doug and Mary*

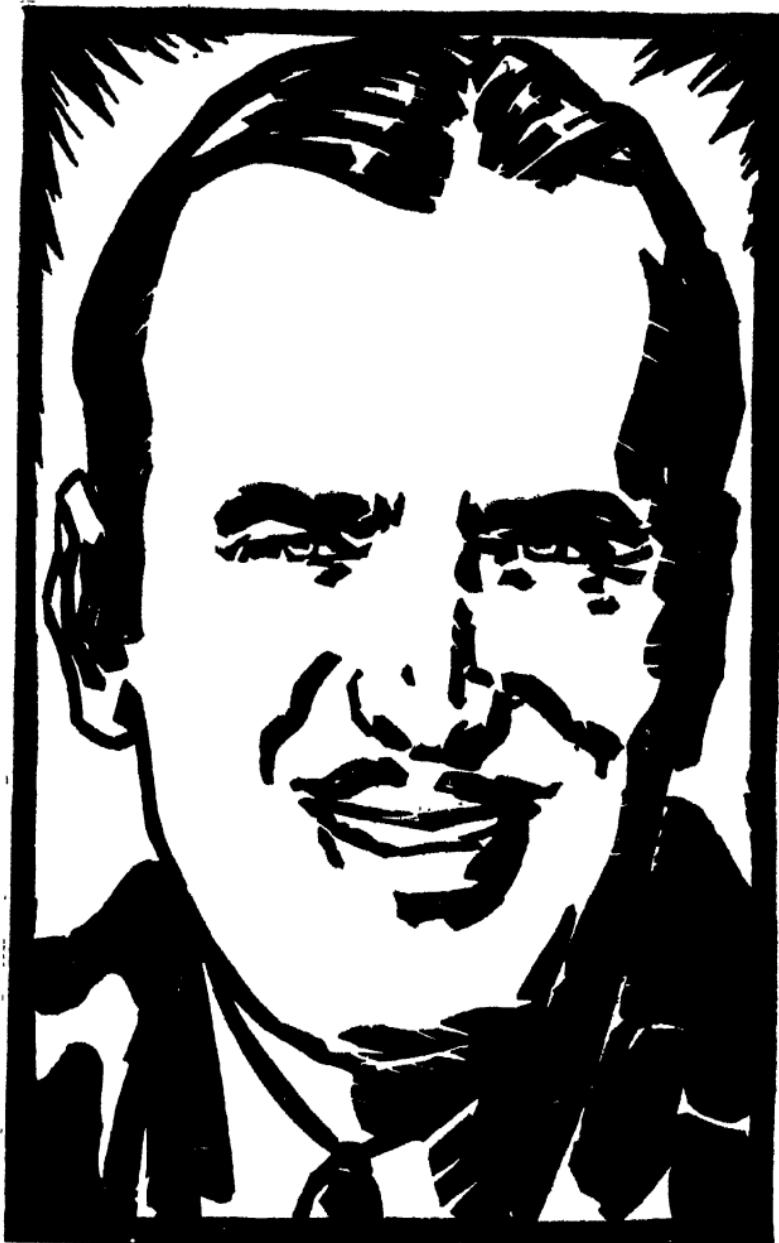
husband, collect eccentricities as though they were pearls of great price, Mary stands alone, unadorned, simple. She is dowdy, old-fashioned, her skirts too long, and her hair still piled in those golden unconvincing curls which were so admired in 1915 when Biograph's "Little Mary" was growing into "America's Sweetheart". A comfortable soul who forgets rouge and lipstick, Mary sloshes about on rainy days in rubbers a size too large, a big umbrella over her head. There is something untouched about this woman who has nourished her loveliness throughout her troubles, throughout the fight to eminence. Compared with her showman husband, alive with jokes, Mary, always by his side, fades a little.

The showman has a dark brown face with a sharp straight blackness of brow and mustache, a block of white that is his smile, forever on view, keeping abreast of his enthusiasms. He boosts. He is the public apostle of light, possessing a mental nimbleness as acrobatic as his body. Enthusiasm swings out from him, whirling ideas as on a pin wheel. So excited is his speech that the words are flung out in the irregular rhythm

## *Doug and Mary*

of a woman beating a rug. He loves phrases, full bosomed phrases to choke up a dribbling conversation. "I go to Europe to sit on the veranda of the world," he told a reporter once, adding, "New York is all right to live in if you do not let it live in you."

In the gallery of his gestures rests a pleasant fallacy, publicly encouraged, that he has no head for business. Poor old Fairbanks, his attitude goes, what would he do without Mary and her cash register brain, mental arithmetic Mary. Mary is acknowledged exceedingly smart in business, but Fairbanks refuses credit for any practicality. What he does not mention is that his fortunate business inability led him to invest much of his money in properties which immediately rose high in value, that it induced him to become a director in the Federal Trust and Savings Bank of Hollywood, that it led to the inveigling of Joseph Schenck into the chairmanship of United Artists. That weak head for finance also brought him so tremendous a fortune that the name of Douglas Fairbanks stood at the top of the movie list when the income tax reports were published several years ago. At the directors' meetings



*Douglas Fairbanks*

## *Doug and Mary*

of United Artists, at the lawyer conferences, Fairbanks quietly absorbs, apparently a blank at the table, perhaps asking a few questions. He goes for a short walk. On his return, the words straining against his larynx in a submerging flow of synonyms and explanatory phrases, Fairbanks offers a particularly acute suggestion. He loves to play dead because he makes such a smart ghost.

Doug and Mary are, of course, the King and Queen of Hollywood, providing the necessary air of dignity, sobriety, and aristocracy. Gravely they attend movie openings, cornerstone layings, gravely sit at the head of the table at the long dinners in honor of the cinema great, Douglas making graceful speeches, Mary conducting herself with the self-abnegation of Queen Mary of Britain. Cornerstone layings, dinners, openings are duties; they understand thoroughly their obligation to be present, in the best interests of the motion picture industry.

Loved and indispensable, Pickford and Fairbanks have constructive minds, actuated by a deep and earnest desire to aid the business in which they have won their name and

## *Doug and Mary*

fortune. Throughout their years of screen life, they have studied technique, and are now ready to turn to experimentation. As color photography interested Fairbanks, he produced "The Black Pirate", a picture done in the mellowed old tones of a Rembrandt, with scenes apparently aged in the wood, yellowed with time. Experimentation meant the gathering of experts to aid him. Dwight Franklin, an authority on buccaneer life and paintings, worked in one corner; in another Carl Oscar Borg, the Swedish artist, sketched settings. Anchored on the side-lines were the poet Robert Nichols, writers, thinkers, artistic persons of importance to whom Fairbanks talked and talked and talked.

He wanted, for instance, a scene in which 120 soldiers with cutlass in mouth and swords at side would submerge a galley, swim in formation, and under water at a great depth, and then without breaking ranks rise to the surface in perfect order. The action of this episode was too dramatic to be eliminated merely because it seemed impossible to photograph. Fairbanks called a conference of the painters, the engineers, the chemists,

## *Doug and Mary*

and out of that came a method, devised to take that swimming scene without any water at all.

The preparations consisted in painting a background representing a cross section of the sea. From the top of the set, wisps of tissue paper were suspended giving the illusion of seaweed. A crane was brought in, and then the 120 extras in their dark green costumes were hung by 120 piano wires from the crane. In this midair position, lying on their backs, they went through the motions of the breast stroke as though they were 120 giant crabs struggling to turn themselves over. The crane carried them along. In printing the negative, the scene was reversed, and audiences marveled at soldiers swimming at the bottom of the sea, and once more Douglas Fairbanks had contributed to movie mechanics and æsthetics.

With a Rotarian instinct for slogans, Fairbanks reduces his ten or twelve reel movies to a ten word motto. All through "Don, Son of Zorro", he tapped out "Truth crushed to earth will rise again, if you have the yeast to make it rise". It was his delight to formu-

## *Doug and Mary*

late "Happiness must be earned" for "The Thief of Bagdad".

Every one's advice is asked about the mot-toes. Fairbanks loves to theorize about the movies. His mind is like a cotton table cloth, the theories rubbing off as though they were lint. In the process Fairbanks snags new theories, all working beautifully toward a more glowing Hollywood. The decadence of the films is a source for constant discussion at Pickfair, where Doug and Mary have asked movie criticism from the Duke and Duchess of Alba, Lord and Lady Mountbatten, the Duchess of Sutherland, the King and Queen of Siam, Otto Kahn, Charles Schwab and Babe Ruth.

Doug and Mary are the supreme social successes of the movies. As a wit once remarked of them, "Doug goes to Europe each year to book his royal visitors for the coming year". The rotogravure editors can always fill a spare corner with a new picture of Fairbanks putting grand dukes and belted earls at their ease. When both were in Madrid, causing great demonstrations every time they stepped out of their hotel, the King of Spain requested their attendance at court. Under

## *Doug and Mary*

the chaperonage of the American ambassador Fairbanks went ready with one of his most graceful speeches.

“How’s Fatty Arbuckle?” asked the King.

Fairbanks spent hours anticipating the meeting, just as he always does, dramatizing the life and times of Douglas Fairbanks. Everything is a situation, and he plays for the big moment, then snaps the curtain. There are no third acts for him. Dressing in the morning is a situation. Tall, slim hipped, he wanders between his four closets, full of clothes, unable to decide which of the forty suits he will wear, which one of the dozens of ties, shirts and socks. Mary comes in for consultation. At last the decision is made, and, handsomely dressed, he goes to the studio where he immediately changes into his old white flannels and shirt.

At the studio there are two more tremendous closets, bulging with suits, hats, boxing gloves, balls, canes, rackets, and it is his careless habit to leave the doors open, revealing the tangle. When important guests arrive, Mary runs ahead to shut away that spectacle, closing the door with an apologetic giggle. The guests are always shown his

## *Doug and Mary*

rare and lovely collection of perfumes, and then his elaborate equipment for keeping down the Fairbanks figure, the padded boards for massage, the exercising machines, the swimming pools, the showers, the steam baths.

An ounce of fat means starvation for a week to him, but on the weekends he goes on food jags. It is his Sunday morning practice to take the unwary over the long hard trail behind his house, leading over the mountains. At the end of that walk is a small house to which he sends by car his cook and butler and there breakfast in fabulous quantities is served; and so back to Pickfair.

Pickfair is a luxurious home in which Douglas Fairbanks lived before his marriage to Mary. After the ceremony Mary moved in, bringing with her a few of her possessions. The place has the famous oyster shell shaped swimming pool to which only the friends of the pair come, for there, high on their hill, they receive, never going out except when the movie business demands its king and queen. Everybody comes to them, eager for a dinner party at Pickfair. Mary sits a quiet gracious woman whose adult mind looks with

## **Doug and Mary**

amusement upon the constant flow of Doug's practical jokes.

And after dinner the Fairbanks' entertainment is a movie. Slumped in a deep chair, Doug, the king at ease, home from the studio, and Mary, the grave queen, home from a cornerstone laying, slip back their haloes, and chew peanut brittle.



*Norma Talmadge*

THE movies possess the Talmadges completely. Norma Talmadge loves the movies, needs the movies. Constance Talmadge likes the movies, has been molded by the movies into the picture of just what a charming young movie actress should appear. Mrs. Talmadge, their mother, is deeply grateful to the movies and, by virtue of a sense of fundamentals as sharp as a bread knife, understands the movies thoroughly.

For some time the movies have owned the graciousness of Norma, who brought warm, still romance to the films. The movies had Constance, whose performances were so gay that practically no reviewer could throw out of copy so accurate and satisfying an adjective as sparkling. Constance developed into a deft and fluttering comedienne, possibly the best in the business, while Norma became an actress, moody, dark. Behind them always was the clear-visioned Mrs. Talmadge, with eyes as absorbent as cotton. Once, in reviewing a book, signed by Mrs. Talmadge, and called "The Talmadge Sisters", Frank Sullivan put down this quick comment: "She analyzes them coldly and scientifically and comes to the conclusion that there are no



*Constance Talmadge*

## *The Talmadges*

better film stars starring than they. What could be fairer than that?" But no matter what the book showed of Mrs. Talmadge's maternal publicity ebullience, she really knows exactly what her girls are, how good they are, and how bad. The girls know. There is no bunk about them.

For all the Talmadges are witty, wise, hard-boiled, three instruments powerful in blowing away the fog of flattery which lies heavily over Hollywood. On the sidelines of the girls' existence sits Mrs. Talmadge, a large, fat woman with a broad face. Like the chorus in a Greek play, she tosses in the explanatory phrases upon the ridiculous but earnest gestures of these movie people. The Talmadge wit is almost legendary. Theirs is not the humor of pranks, but that humor of observation, true and blunt, swelling from the shrewdness of sophistication into wit, mainly disconcerting.

Nothing can impress the Talmadges; nothing ever has. They have the same gift of being just a little fresh with personages which has won such bounty for Will Rogers. Mrs. Talmadge especially, a woman with a genius for steering, for prodding, for man-

## *Doug and Mary and*

aging, refuses to be discountenanced. Side-wise glances, careful but sly, form no part of her public manner. She uses the stare. She asks, immediately after introductions: Who is he? What does he do? Where does he come from? Where is he going? It was one of the official secrets just after the publication of "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" that Anita Loos had reaped the stack of worldly wheat disseminated by Dorothy in the book from Mrs. Talmadge. She refuses to allow any one to swank her. At a tea at Norma's a distinguished writer, on being offered cake, said, a trifle cutely: "I've had two sandwiches, but I can't resist the cake." "You've had six," said Mrs. Talmadge. "But have some cake."

When Constance came rushing home to tell her mother about her first job—driving a chariot for D. W. Griffith in "Intolerance", she grew ecstatic about the acting possibilities, outlined the future ease of her career, explained what she would do with all her money, and wound up by promising her mother a life of strawberries and cream.

"You'd better think about the horses," said Mrs. Talmadge.

## *The Talmadges*

Constance Talmadge has now all the charm, the fascination which dreaming playwrights bestow affectionately on the actress



*Mrs. Talmadge*

heroines of their dramas, on the heroines who bring young men to desperation in the second act and cause society mothers to send out missionary-minded uncles for rescue work. Her

## *Doug and Mary and*

hair is a glorious gold, bleached defiantly to a glamorous brilliance that has a startling smartness. She always acts as though she had swallowed an arc light for breakfast. Her frequent and favorite phrase is:

“Hello, hello! Come in. Have a drink.”

But she doesn’t always drink. She is just always ready for a party, ready to be friends, ready to enjoy anything. Her enjoyment reserve has never been exhausted. Whatever she does, she loves. Her husky voice, with its sudden comic changes of pitch and emphasis, seems to be forever saying, “Had a swell time”. There is always light about her, a noise and laughter. Never seriousness, never sudden quiet. The phonograph is playing, and Constance is singing, and the words are all wrong. At home, on the train, in the hotel, the phonograph keeps on. Her mother calls her “Sadie Thompson”. Even on the short ride to Philadelphia from New York, at the time of the Dempsey-Tunney fight, she needed her phonograph. And it was at that fight that Constance sat in her beautiful clothes through all the downpour, yelling, clutching, blotting in the rain, sneezing, but loving every minute of it. Back in

## *The Talmadges*

New York stayed Norma, listening over the radio to the fight, crying all through it. She felt so badly for Dempsey! The passing of a championship brought on great and valiant tears.

For Norma, dark, thoughtful, but with the same Yankee-headed humor, has a slight touch of melancholy about her, an emotionalism which is always tearing at the throat. There is within her a lump of reserve, a moodiness which keeps even her family at a scared distance. She has a dignity, a cool impersonality which makes for distinct uncomfortableness when she desires. The movies are definitely the structural pillars of her life; but, just as all actresses, all actors, managers, directors, love to talk of retiring, so does Norma. The younger she gets in publicity matter, the more she talks of retiring; she neither believes it herself nor gets believed. Constance, however, could easily give up the movies so long as there was something to be shoved hastily into their place.

For the movies are the career of Norma, enjoyment the career of Constance, and the girls the career of Mrs. Talmadge; and all are magnificently successful.



*Adolph Zukor*

“IT’S a long way from 14th Street and penny arcades to Broadway and the Paramount Building,” concluded James J. Walker, his hat tip-tilted over his right eye, as he eulogized Adolph Zukor at the cornerstone laying of the Paramount Building.

Mr. Zukor stepped forward, the news photographers snapped their cameras, the publicity department smiled; and Mr. Zukor, strangling appreciative words, cried. He always cries at the sight of his own success. Public dinners, company dinners, conventions are occasions for Zukor and his tears. They are the overflow of a man terribly, childishly enjoying himself. When the exhibitors knew him in those first years, they knew him as shrewd, but with a vein of sentiment. That vein is now varicose.

A brief, quiet man, he is gentle but not disarmingly so. Beneath that creamy top, that soft slow voice, lies rock which nothing shifts. A tense quality, a sense of strain forms an aura about him even in those long hours on his elaborate private golf links. In his office there is bleakness in the narrowed mouth twisting as he talks in a monotone. Mocha shadows his unrevealing eyes, and gray is sprayed through what is left of his

## *Doug and Mary and*

hair. He wears always a ring of thick gold set with three large diamonds, one of the first pluckings from early profits.

Adolph Zukor loves to think of himself in his own words as a "visionary of the fillums", one whose mind photographed a panorama of 1930 movies in 1913. From his own press agents histories of him have gone forth referring to him as a fanatic whose early theories have now been proved correct ones. He is called, in simple deference, a "cross between Christopher Columbus and Napoleon".

He may well be a visionary. He is also the outstanding executive genius of the movies, the most ruthless gambler. Before the others were out of the nickelodeon period, he had stretched out for big productions. When the others economized, he paid out, commercially courageous. But when suddenly a menace to his organization loomed up in an uprising of the independent producers Zukor, in a mental panic, rushed to Minneapolis where the embattled exhibitors were meeting. There the icicle sad-eyed, begged for kindness from men whom his company might have swallowed pleasantly. Again Adolph Zukor wept.

## *Adolph Zukor*

At executive meetings the little brief man sits frozen bitterly blue in the midst of the red hot argument. He smokes. After all the words have been uncaged, this old sentimentalist proposes one of his bargain-sharp decisions. It floats in, a gumshoe notion, an uncannily shrewd notion. Such were the delicately worded propositions which resulted in the suffocation of competitive production companies, of distribution organizations, of many tender exhibitors. Zukor kills, and then buys the corpse from the family of the deceased. A tactician, his march to movie millions has involved many slaughtered, many subsidiary companies formed to bridge an organization abyss, many associates, and many associates bought out.

At Famous Players-Lasky Zukor has the rôle of money man. He is an illustration of the multiplication table. He amalgamates. He congeals. He is anaconda Adolph, with a versatile appetite. After slugging a chain of exhibitors he goes to the projection rooms and turns soft on viewing the films of young love, of motherhood and of dogs whose heroism has saved whole villages. He bawled at "Peter Pan", and announced loudly at the

## *Doug and Mary and*

conclusion of "The Ten Commandments" that it was a great moral lesson from which we might all learn something. Then he went back to his office to shuffle with millions.

Out of the possession of millions, he gets an honest thrill. The mating of several millions with several more excites him, particularly in those moments when the government worries about trusts. Ever since that day when he left his Hungarian home in a town so small (near Budapest) that it never merited space on the map, he has been thrilling himself. In his most exquisite interview manner, for fifteen years he has been telling how he landed here "a lone emigrant lad", in the words of his first publicity agent. At twenty-four he was making enough money in Chicago in the fur business to marry a dark plump Hungarian girl. At twenty-five he had a son, at twenty-seven a daughter, and by the time he was thirty, an extra \$3000 which he loaned a friend for investment in a Fourteenth Street penny arcade. The impetus of that loan pushed him into theaters, and not long afterwards he had a few theaters capitalized at \$250,000.

## *A d o l p h Z u k o r*

Then for six months Adolph Zukor sat in his small office, scribbling figures on a pad, thinking, concentrating on a producing campaign, reasoning what would happen if he began making well-known plays with famous players. At length exhibitor Zukor organized the Famous Players Film Company, manipulating it from a \$300,000 adventure into a two and a half million dollar company by the time Arthur Brisbane was writing editorials in the New York *Evening Journal* advising the stage in one sentence paragraphs to watch out for this Zukor march upon Broadway. Merging next with the Lasky Company, he was enabled to play with ten millions. Later came the formation of Paramount as a separate distribution company. Some Zukor bayoneting with Famous Players-Lasky absorbing Paramount, and five millions switched. When some years later the 189 theaters in the Famous Players-Lasky chain were turned over to Balaban and Katz of Chicago, to be managed for Famous under the trade name of Publix, the icicle operated with ten millions again. That deal finished, this man, who first brought

## *Doug and Mary and*

Wall Street money into the movies, shifted twenty millions to gain a two-thirds stock control in that same Balaban and Katz. Now high in his office in the Paramount Building, Adolph Zukor, president of a corporation whose capital is reputed to be \$100,000,000, walks and plans and fingers the bronze model of the first baby shoes of his first grandchild.

Any fine picture, made by any company and acclaimed widely, makes him rejoice, for he must want the movies to progress, be respected and admired. When he first came into the business and made money, he and his wife were just two wealthy persons looked down upon as film folk, one grade removed from the pants business. Millions in furs would bring no public glory, and millions in movies could bring even less. Then the movies took on stature, a semblance of dignity and many art terms. The Zukors automatically became two wealthy persons of some importance, and Zukor himself was proclaimed the supreme movie man, the industry's genius. To make that mean anything at all, he must have the country's appreciation of the value and service of the motion picture. He won't joke about movie dawns.

## *A d o l p h Zukor*

A serious man, his being is his business, and his pleasure is film parties during which he hops about in a glow, the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Second only to his love for his four grandchildren and their amusements is his love for his 1000 acre country estate in Rockland County on the Hudson. He calls it a farm, but Mrs. Zukor, with less informality but more accuracy, terms it the finest private golf club in the country. Equipped with a magnificent eighteen hole links on which Leo Diegel, the course professional for a while, cured the Zukor slice, the place has several houses, one of which is reserved entirely for the grandchildren and their nurses. Each summer Mr. Zukor collects his own children and his relations, and puts them on the farm, where they all live in a haze of golfing. Mr. Zukor commutes between the farm and New York in his speed boat. On his return home he immediately plays nine or eighteen holes, takes a plunge in the swimming pool, has dinner, a consultation with the grounds superintendent, and then, if it is a Wednesday, Friday or Saturday evening, he goes to his tiny private theater. There, surrounded

## *Doug and Mary and*

by his family and guests, much in the patriarch manner, the movie man in knickers sees a movie.

The winters for the next ten years will be spent in New York in the great new Savoy Plaza Hotel where the Zukors have a specially built duplex apartment from whose windows he may look out on Fifth Avenue and Central Park. About four times a week he will pass the doorman on the way to attend a prominent first night. For Mr. Zukor, as Mrs. Zukor once explained, enjoys the drama only on first nights.

At all the best openings they can be seen in their aisle seats during the season, Mrs. Zukor in ermine and orchids, Mr. Zukor, tired and sallow above the black and white of his dinner clothes. On Sunday evenings, however, the pair have a quiet homelike evening in one of his own theaters. It is usually the Paramount, where he pleasurabley observes the several million dollars' worth of gold leaf and red velvet, the crystal and lights, the crowding customers whose evening's amusement derives from him, the industry's financial genius. And then, going

## *Adolph Zukor*

up the side staircase with his wife by his side, he surveys the bust of himself, Adolph Zukor, looking not unlike a very noble Roman senator.



Jesse L. Lasky

ONLY in the movies could the exuberant Jesse L. Lasky have discovered such fertile pasturage for the feeding of his talent for entertainment. As cornetist and vaudeville agent, he was, although good, necessarily limited; but as a deviser of movie entertainment, Jesse Lasky has been limitless. With an instinctive knowledge of showmanship, a feeling for the public's amusement, he can put on a show.

Jesse Lasky sits at the orderly desk on which he can find nothing that he wants; and there, with his hands fluttering much like those of Lillian Gish, he gropes in his apparently artless way to find out what the public wants. He does know that what the public enjoys is precisely what he enjoys: simple, childish affairs of no more importance than a banana's skin; movies in which it is demonstrated how truly funny a smack on the nose can be; movies in which idiocy is carried on elaborately; movies swollen with gags, rowdy and wild, movies with laughs which lie in the diaphragm. He does not want to be educated, elevated, in the movies. He wants to be amused.

To his sixteen-year-old son, Jesse Lasky, Jr., whose small book of poems was pub-

## *Doug and Mary and*

lished last year, that attitude has something unfortunately juvenile about it. The boy grows earnest at the prospect of a higher level of intelligence in pictures, at the prospect of the movies becoming a haven for brains as well as for beauty. And his father keeps on fantastically making bigger and bigger productions, glamorously beautiful, knowing that the country is eminently satisfied when it sees the face and legs of a lovely woman set in celluloid.

Everything in this world is translated to him through the movies, the stage or vaudeville. He sees in scenes. His son asked him what is resin.

“Resin,” explained Lasky simply, “is what acrobats rub on their hands.”

To many the success of Lasky has proved inexplicable. They point out the disorderliness of this man whose face has the guilelessness of an egg, which it exactly resembles, a palely pink egg topped with eyeglasses. They point out his almost complete lack of those qualities of efficiency supposed to be necessary adjuncts of business prosperity. They point out that he practically requires a nurse to follow after him, to prevent him

## *J e s s e   L .   L a s k y*

from eating crullers at midnight. Whoever travels with him must knot his tie. He must be restrained from the purchase of cinnamon shaded shirts, of green and yellow ties. It is a theory of his friends that all packages from men's shops are returned unopened by Mrs. Lasky, who must aid in the selection of the quiet suits in which he actually appears.

Perhaps, they point out, Lasky pretends that those mild gray suits are gay with stripes; for he has a fiction mind, always playing a game of make-believe. One of his unique performances at pretense occurred in Germany, where he had been traveling with Gilbert Miller. At Salsburg the pair were directed to a bank to exchange their money. The clerk handed Lasky a form which, even in English, would have been terrorizing. Undismayed, the cheerful Lasky carefully filled it out. He wrote his name and address and where he was going, adding that Mrs. Lasky was a painter, that his son was a poet. The only defect was that Lasky, unable to read, write or speak German, had answered the serious questions of the German government all wrong.

On this same trip it was his delight to pre-

## *Doug and Mary and*

tend that his son was still about six years old and most passionately fond of lead soldiers. Border officials grew insistently curious over the Lasky desire to import dozens of blue and red toy soldiers into France. Their curiosity grew also curiously menacing when they found out that the large pink gentleman had managed artfully to lose his passport.

He enjoyed it, just as he enjoyed the excitement of a bull fight in Madrid, which he had attended with Gilbert Miller. The awkward matador had wounded the bull sixteen times without killing. In the midst of the crowd yelling for the matador to be taken out was that most excitable Spaniard, Lasky, the fair haired, screaming:

“Throw him out, the big bum.”

Jesse Lasky is enormously amused at the pleasures of this universe, pleased at the adjustment of matters. He has money, and charming children, a wife who gained good notices when she exhibited her paintings in New York, and certain position. For a private philosophy, therefore, he has been contented with “God’s in His Heaven, all’s right with the world”. His optimism has

## *Jesse L. Lasky*

been increasing, his radiance more warming as he sifted his way through those early days of trying to find out just what he was good for.

First he took his fun as a reporter on a newspaper in San Francisco, where he was born. He covered stories about lost children, and stray cats, minor deaths and little adulteries. From the city room, his rambling taste carried him to the gold fields of Alaska, where even less happened to him than in those nights of reporting. He shipped to Honolulu, and ended by being the only white man in a Hawaiian band. Finally he came home to San Francisco, and at length met Hermann the Magician. He abandoned the cornet for the more strenuous duties of manager to Hermann. All this led directly to his forming a vaudeville agency with his sister, Blanche, who sometime later married Samuel Goldwyn.

Lasky was now definitely in the theatre. With Cecil B. DeMille for his stage manager, and William LeBaron for his lyricist, he put on vaudeville shows, entitled "A Night in a Turkish Bath", "Three Beautiful Blondes". Lasky's "Redheads" were fa-

## *Doug and Mary and*

mous. Alaska had yielded no gold, but these stage acts put money in his pocket. Then Lasky went to Paris, saw the Folies Bergere, and brought back to New York the first scheme for introducing the cabaret. He would have people eating and drinking and watching pretty girls dance and sing.

In a handsome blaze of elegance the Folies Bergere opened in New York under the proud management of Jesse Lasky. His pink and oval face shone as he looked at the first audiences. But soon the pinkness faded, the oval lengthened. The Folies Bergere died on its feet, brilliantly. Lasky was broke and scared.

By this time the movies had advanced far enough for great tales to drift into the dining room of the Astor, where all the suddenly enriched movie men lunched. Lasky and DeMille and Samuel Goldwyn joined together, a trio which later separated but all of whom have been successful. DeMille went west, and there in Hollywood hired a barn, a much publicized barn to which visitors later were taken as a monument of the industry, a monument not unlike the little houses in which presidents are born. Lasky pioneered,

## *Jesse L. Lasky*

made money, and finally merged with Adolph Zukor, incorporating as the Famous Players-Lasky Corp., with Zukor to handle the finance, and Lasky the production.

Ever since then, in his apparently artless manner, Jesse L. Lasky has been a movie force, bending his strength these days towards the production of pictures, amazingly beautiful pictures. It all allows him to be so famous that, at the openings of his new films the sidewalk mobs pick him out at sight. Mobs inside congratulate him during the intermissions. Few see him leave. For when the tired ushers are ready to close the doors, they have to wait for the large pink gentleman who has lost his gloves.



*Lillian Gish*

THE sturdiness of yellow kitchen crockery lies concealed in the tea cup delicacy of Lillian Gish. She is at once the oak and the vine. Courageously, gallantly, the oak has made of wistfulness a fortune itself.

Through all the most outrageous incidents, the gentle Gish has most amazingly preserved her unique quality of facial innocence as fresh as "rain on cherry blossoms". Above all the undertow of dirt, Lillian Gish has tranquilly swept the surface until she can now attend Hollywood parties, chastely charming, sweetly decorous in her primly flowing gown. While others dance, she sits a picture of innocence and maiden purity, this sensible worldly woman whose deliberate front is aloofness and unbelievable virgin beauty. There never was so much concentrated innocence as in those pale blue eyes of hers, shaded by star pointed lashes, as in that little mouth posed as though repeating "prunes" and "prisms".

But Lillian Gish, the enigma of Hollywood, knows what is to be known. She has no illusions about the movies. Her fragility makes men protective, yet no woman in Hollywood needs or takes less protection.

## *Doug and Mary and*

Her interest travels beyond acting, direction, costuming, into the box office. The American Duse keeps a mild blue eye on the cash box. It is her own admission that the little hands have fluttered too often, but that the public loves the flutter of those pathetic white hands.

There are many who moan not only at the hand flutter, but at the other funny little screen habits which have aided in the formation of the pretty Gish tradition. They ache at those scenes in which she runs bewildered, frantic into the night, in which the little feet go pitter patter, in which she chases birds or butterflies around the sunlit rose bushes, aided by the glinting photography, the hidden studio lights touching up eye and hair and lip. One sickened critic asked plaintively if she ever expected to catch that bird.

All these are set into her pictures, but once through, Miss Gish goes triumphantly on. For years she has been winning her way with whimpers. She has never resorted to the crudities of bawling. Her whimpers have been hushed for the most part, a suggestion of whimper. The crystal clarity of her face required only a breeze to whip into change

## *Lillian Gish*

whereas others of her craft dealt exclusively with typhoons. It is all perhaps because Miss Gish, in those magnificent Griffith days, learned to act with her underlip, her eyes, her lashes.

By the very perfection of her performances, she has proved and to her own dismay, the limited appeal of screen perfection. For although she has reduced her audiences to murmuring audibly, "That is wonderful acting", she has not reduced them to the obviously greater state of uncomfortable dumbness. Miss Gish is too perfect for that. She commands the mind and eye, but the heart retains its placid beat; just another manifestation of the idea that emotion and analysis will not stride together; that you cannot continue to cry while wondering about the tear ducts. With never the pulling thrill of the sweep of turbines whirling in power houses she acts in the perfect but pleasant rhythm of watch wheels.

That touch of perfection, that pleasant placidity follows into her private life. She is a solitary woman who has cloaked her solitude with a shawl of mystery, receding much like Duse and Maude Adams, those idols for

## *Doug and Mary and*

whom she lights a taper. From Duse came her screen credo, from Maude Adams the example of completely divorcing public and private life. Like Miss Adams, she refuses interviews, and has now begun experimenting with film itself. The private lives of Duse, Adams and Gish are not for public knowledge. Much has been squeezed out of that life until there remains only work and a series of great and sincere performances.

The essentials of her life can be folded like an accordion into these few points. She started acting when she was just a golden-haired child, chased by Chinamen through melodramas. From those classic scenes, she entered a convent school; but left there so early that the majority of her knowledge has been self gathered. A visit to her friend of the melodrama days, Mary Pickford, at the Fourteenth Street studio in 1912 led to those years of Griffith direction in "The Birth of a Nation", "Hearts of the World", "Broken Blossoms", "Intolerance". When she slipped away from Griffith, it was believed that without his hypnosis she could do nothing. But the stubborn strength of Lillian Gish was mated with ability. After various connec-

## *Lillian Gish*

tions, she settled down with Inspiration Pictures which led to the famous trial which she attended, sitting in the courtroom looking like one of Sir John Tenniel's drawings of bewildered Alice in Wonderland. The pale Lillian nibbled throughout on carrots, and ever since then the columns of the tabloids have known her simply as "Carrots" Gish. Then came the move to the studios of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and her performances as Hester Prynne, as Mimi, as Annie Laurie.

None of that has touched her smothered existence. Working hard with long hours, Miss Gish lives with her beloved sick mother in a charming but not elaborate home managed by her secretary, once the secretary of Mrs. Oliver Belmont. In that home she spends her hours. She is an excellent horsewoman, a good swimmer, but she rides alone, swims alone, refusing to be known as an athletic woman. She does charitable work, being kind to animals, scene shifters and little extra girls. Tired, languid, taking no part in parties, Lillian Gish goes to bed early except on those nights when she entertains at small dinner parties for authors visiting Hollywood. Authors, in particular Joseph

## *Doug and Mary and*

Hergesheimer, George Jean Nathan, Carl Van Vechten, F. Scott Fitzgerald, delight in this woman who looks like only a pretty blonde person, but who is serious, desires to be serious. Although they do not discover her with the Phaedras, Religio Medici or Rasselas, they do find her with Cabell, Shaw and Wells, the pages cut. She tells them bits about herself, that "all pretty young women like her, but that old ugly ones hate her". There is little nonsense about her, and just as she has suppressed all else about her, she represses her neat wit. If occasionally it breaks through in that quiet voice, it comes out as though she were exceedingly displeased with herself.

"Wit is for men", says Lillian Gish.

And while the life of Hollywood goes violently on, budding scandals, marriage, birth, deaths and divorces, up in her hill home Lillian Gish lives blandly in harmony with her face. Nothing can startle its subdued contours. She is good composition. Tranquilly, Lillian Gish sits, dressed in white organdie with her ash blonde hair down her back, relaxed on the window seat looking

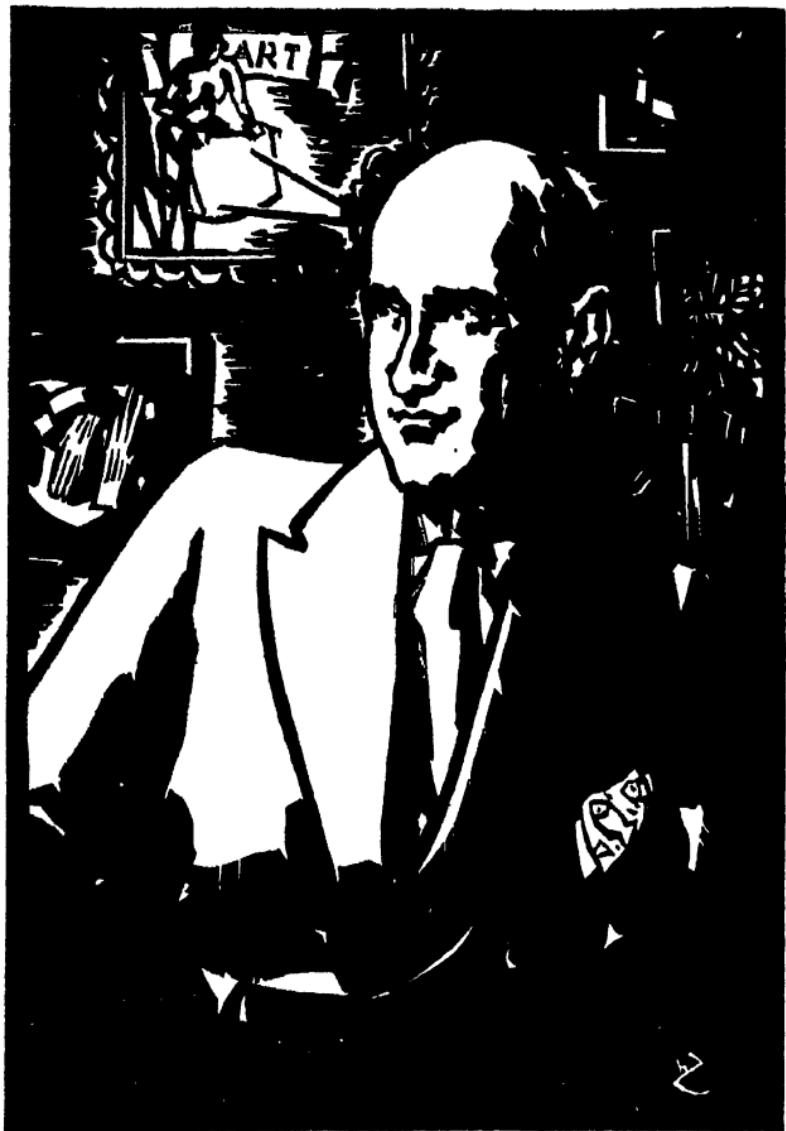
## *Lillian Gish*

out for hours into the depths of the California night.

“What are you looking at, Lillian?” Mrs. Gish has asked for years.

“Nothing, mother, just looking.”

And she continues gazing out into space, a white fingered maiden with the fragility of a Fragonard, a white fingered maiden who has deliberately, harshly, washed her life with gray.



*Samuel Goldwyn*

**L**ONESOME and persistent, Samuel Goldwyn stands, a movie institution whose success has never been satisfactorily explained. The industry swears at him, laughs at him, half affectionately calls him Sammie. Every one has had business with him, and out of the association there is at least one grand story.

Some tell also of the unconquerable Goldwyn enthusiasm, of the terrible tenacity of the man's invincible salesmanship, of his faith in Goldwyn, and of his constant fumbling for finer pictures. As he rides furiously toward his goal of Better Pictures, Sam Goldwyn rips out of his purse vast sums, expecting by the sheer weight of gold to give quality to bunk. In his fierce desire to be the art patron of the movies, he sent to Hollywood Maurice Maeterlinck, unaware that this static dramatist would only unravel for him a story of the sex life of bees. After that collapse, the indomitable Goldwyn petitioned Sigmund Freud please to help him clear up sex in pictures. Disappointed in the Freudian refusal, he started on the long but amusing expedition to capture the head of Shaw, an expedition which only ended when Shaw settled everything by his retort, "We cannot

## *Doug and Mary and*

agree, Mr. Goldwyn. I speak of money, you speak of Art."

There is no caution in this man. Where he wills, he dives, striking straight into depths and debts no other producer will plumb. Periodically the business suicide of Goldwyn is announced. Each time he comes up with a smile of fatter inner satisfaction. His whitish eyes then smile cold and thin, his nose with its punched down flatness wrinkles in pleasure, and the wide breach of his mouth spreads.

The facts about this movie institution are these: He was born in Warsaw, Poland, about 1882; he was married once to the sister of Jesse Lasky; he is now married to Frances Howard; he always keeps himself exceedingly well conditioned; he likes pointed shoes; he dresses a little too glossily; he has Rudolph Valentino's old valet; he calls himself, lovingly, Mr. Goldwyn; he swoons over celebrities; above all, he adores to be seen talking with Charlie Chaplin in the lobby of the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles. Since the success of "Stella Dallas", Mr. Goldwyn has adopted a certain ponderousness, a slow mouthing of his words, as be-

## *Samuel Goldwyn*

comes a man of prestige, godfather of such a picture.

Goldwyn first came into pictures with Jesse L. Lasky, at that time his brother-in-law. He had sickened of selling gloves, and went into the Jesse Lasky Photoplay Company. But, after it was merged with Adolph Zukor, Goldwyn was found outside, with the brotherly sum of \$600,000 in his pocket. Most of that he immediately tossed into the company which he formed with the Selwyn brothers, Arch and Edgar. As the Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, it lasted seven strenuous years.

When he was a glove salesman, his name was Goldfish; but with the achievement of \$600,000 and a picture presidency, he lost the old name and found that of the company, a coined name, composed of the first syllable of Goldfish and the last of Selwyn. Not long after this operation, Goldwyn was once more bought out of a movie company.

With cash again, he started out this time as an independent producer, releasing through First National. But trouble came once more; and, after a series of law fights, he moved on, leaving the Madison Avenue offices of First

## *Doug and Mary and*

National for the Seventh Avenue ones of United Artists. That fight provided an opposing lawyer the opening to say: "Your credo, Sam, is: don't be a piker, give me the nickel."

While the others in that exclusive consistory of movie men of power which includes Zukor, and Fox, and Loew, all have massive corporations lying docilely at heel, Sam Goldwyn goes on alone, fighting.

Alone, he has been the most successful. For the driving force of Goldwyn has the thump of a steam sledge, the regularity of a railroad watch. When he was with the big companies, that power was dissipated, diverted into organized channels. Now he concentrates on the film of the moment. He harries the cast. He irritates the director into the final push to the peak. He scatters his gold for more velvets, more flood, more horses. He offers jobs all around; none so lowly that to him Goldwyn has not volunteered a movie place. He pays prices fabulous and ridiculous, adoring the grand manner, babying his extravagance, a producer who would make a super Christ-picture only if he could have fifty Apostles.

## *Samuel Goldwyn*

There comes a time when the industry is aware that Sam Goldwyn is hocked to the collar button. Through it all he battles on, tearing out check after check on the premise that if he spends enough the picture must be good. He knows what the public likes. Into six reels of mother love emotionalism, such as "Stella Dallas", he dumps his cash. It was suggested to him that he try to persuade Arthur Brisbane to write the sub-titles for *Stella*.

"Who is this boy Brisbane?" asked Sam, tipping back in his gros-point office chair. "Tell him to come around to see me."

Not all of the \$800,000 which he flung into "The Winning of Barbara Worth" could lift out of inanity the complete sogginess of that Harold Bell Wright scenario. He gloried in that expenditure, contrasting it with the handsome studio war evoked at Famous Players-Lasky because D. W. Griffith spent \$900,000 on "The Sorrows of Satan". But Goldwyn carries on, fighting, growing incoherent over the magnificence of each new movie, his greatest, his most expensive. For where he conducts business there must be excitement, publicity, lawsuits. In business

## *Doug and Mary and*

conferences, when anything goes wrong, he jumps and yells, throwing out a barrage of blue shoutings. His law bills range high, among the highest in the movies, since he is always clapping on a suit claiming anything from fraud to murder.

“You don’t work for Sam,” some one said, “you enlist for the duration of the war.”

But that is wiped away in the spectacle of his salesmanship. He can attract new capital to a corporation turned corpse. Nothing deters him. Thrown down a shaftway, kicked downstairs, Goldwyn returns, hat in hand, his enormous mouth stretched into a grin. These were his tactics in glove selling. They are still his modified movie tactics.

Through that method the du Ponts were seduced into backing him, Joseph M. Schenck into releasing his pictures, Henry King and George Fitzmaurice into directing them. That persistency of his, that suavity of salesman Sam, back in the days when he slammed doors at the old Goldwyn Company, sold the notion of going to Hollywood to an earnest little band, known in publicity stuffing as “The Eminent Authors”. Under Goldwyn hypnosis Mary Roberts Rinehart, Gertrude

## *Samuel Goldwyn*

Atherton, Rupert Hughes, Rita Weiman, Rex Beach, Basil King, Le Roy Scott and Gouverneur Morris all went to the Coast. For it is his principle to surround himself with workers of high academic knowledge, allowing them their superiorities, but keeping those superiorities not too far above box office heat.

In that same spirit of helpfulness and hopeless optimism, he shipped Maeterlinck west. Legend rises about that disastrous venture, legend which delighted the studios. Goldwyn has never understood why. At the impressive scene at the station in New York, the producer took his poet tenderly by the hand and bid him good-by with:

“I know you’ll make good, Morrie.”

Maeterlinck didn’t. And Sam announced plaintively:

“That Morrie. I trusted him, and he wrote me a story about bees.”



DOWN on the road to Rockville Center, L. I., stands a great white colonial house. Its shutters are black. On the black are painted bunches of red roses. The red roses are the contribution to Americana of the mistress of the house, Gilda Gray.

This country home of the lady whose muscles have long been famous, stretches out, relaxing gently in the beautiful grounds. Behind the house lies the dancer's vegetable gardens, where she grubs about among the radishes, the young yellowish heads of baby lettuce, the slender bean tendrils. She scrambles in the dirt. Her hair is a wild yellow and her face is thin, white with wide blue eyes; she owns a wide scarlet mouth; she owns a wide white forehead.

A frankly spoken woman with a vocabulary noted more for its naturalness than its culture, she gustily tells the tale of how she danced her way up to a city apartment, all salmon-tinted Spanish, to a colonial house whose colonialism is now mainly confined to its whiteness and floor plan.

"I wouldn't have it all colonial inside," explains Miss Gray. "Too much like living in a museum. I put the dining room in

## *Doug and Mary and*

Venetian, the bedroom in French, and the kitchen in Polish."

The reasons for the Venetian dining room, the French bedrooms, are obvious enough; but the Polish kitchen is there because Gilda Gray lived all her childhood and girlhood in Polish kitchens. Back in Cracow, where she was born and lived until she was seven years old, the kitchen was the only room which skinny Maryanne Michalska knew. A hot, steaming kitchen in Bayonne, N. J., in which her big-bosomed mother bent in the blackness to wash thick dishes, was her next kitchen, a kitchen wherein her father rested in stockinginged feet after his labors for the Standard Oil Company.

Then the family left the scraggly, tipsy houses of Bayonne for those of Milwaukee and its suburb, Cudahy. There the scrawny Mary went from the kitchen every day to the parochial school with the kid across the street, Lenore Ulric. On Saturdays the two came home late because the nuns favored them, allowing the Michalska girl and her friend to sweep the sidewalks about the school and church. For further reward the pair received, alternately, little holy pictures or else

## *Gilda Gray*

thin delicate sandwiches from the nuns' lunch.

When the girl was older, her father was suddenly and unexpectedly taken with an ambition above that of the day laborer. He wanted to be the Polish Alderman. Alliance was sought with the leading politician, a saloonkeeper. In line of party duty, Mary married the saloonkeeper's son. She got a husband, and her father got the aldermanship. Then she went to work. After poking around for days, she persuaded the owner of the neighborhood bar, with restaurant in the rear, to hire her. To be heard in the bar, she sang her songs through a megaphone, pushing out her thin, strident voice while vigorous feet slipped through the sawdust.

From the bar she departed for Chicago, to be an entertainer in a cabaret: the Arsonia, a rowdy place. As Mary Gray she flung her body about, shouted out a nasty song, *The Dirty Dozen*, singing song after song, while she danced with both hands outstretched for tips. If a dollar was thrust toward her, she deposited it in the entertainers' can, in which all pooled their tips for an equal

## Doug and Mary and

split later. If she was given five dollars, she put it in her stocking.

One hot night, instead of throwing her body about, she stood still. She wet her fingers. She ran them down her powdered body. She rippled her skin. Her muscles jumped to the beat of the blues. She shimmied. That sly, sinuous movement, a shaking in the heat as though she were chilled, brought her to the more than friendly notice of Chicago; and then Rosalie Stewart, producer among other things of "The Show-Off" and "Craig's Wife", transplanted Mary Gray to New York.

A sure, slangy girl, she was taken to Sophie Tucker, fat, knowing Sophie Tucker, who was at the moment reading a violent story about a dancer named Gilda, in that one time product of the Mencken and the Nathan, *The Smart Set*.

"You'll only be a boob as Mary," said Sophie. "Be Gilda: Gilda Gray!"

Not long afterward Sophie Tucker took Gilda Gray along with her to one of the Sunday evening performances at the Winter Garden. Miss Tucker delivered her songs and then stepped closer to the footlights,

## *Gilda Gray*

joked with the orchestra leader, and graciously beckoned to a completely unafraid girl.

"This is Miss Gilda Gray. She will endeavor to entertain you while I change my dress."

And Gilda did.

The Shuberts, those collective brothers, saw her; and Gilda Gray was incorporated into the Shubert "Gaieties of 1919". She had to hold in her Chicago shimmy, make it refined, she now relates; but nevertheless the opening night shakes were powerful enough to energize Al Jolson into trying to climb over the lights to give her his watch and vest.

When the shimmy died, Gilda Gray developed a South Sea Island dance for the Rendezvous, a night club owned by Gil Boag, now her husband and business manager. She went through the thrill of being the pet of the season, through the numbness of being only the pet of last season, through all the bewilderment of popularity in one town and none in the next. At last she went into the movies, into her own starring picture, "Aloma of the South Seas", duplicating on

## *Doug and Mary and*

the screen the rhythms of her grass skirt swishings. With Aloma Gilda went on tour, to achieve an amazing success in movie houses.

In three months she grossed a million dollars, a million dollars paid out by people of the land to see her run from the wings in her green grass skirt, the white flesh of her thighs gleaming in the spotlight. They paid to see her go through the motions of a dance long since staled by imitators. In one town in the Middle West the billboards were on fire with twin announcements: Gilda Gray would appear at the Star Theatre, and at the town hall a cabinet member would speak. The town hall, of course, was empty, and the movie house mobbed. Gilda's legs were eloquence enough.

She is known affectionately as the Box Office Girl, for with a strong twist of her muscles she can pull a falling movie house out from the debit side for at least the length of her engagement. It is all a simple business arrangement. The house manager is asked the measure of his record week. Gil Boag guarantees that the manager shall once again equal his record and, until that record

## *Gilda Gray*

is reached, Miss Gray shall not receive a cent. Of the money taken in beyond the record, Miss Gray shall receive the major portion. The manager has in addition all the advertising streaming through the countryside.

For Gilda is ballyhooed over the land much in the manner of a one-ring circus, and with all the magic. She comes to town heralded by polysyllabic adjectives, by giant posters, by interviews in the newspapers, revealing her recipes for angel food cake, for holding a husband, and for keeping stockings free from runs. The glorious magnificence of the red and gold circus methods result in an endless line to the box office, and finally Gilda Gray and Gil Boag leave with one to fifteen thousand dollars.

That money is being carefully invested, for both have known how fast the money of show folks can disappear. When Gilda rides in a gray-and-gilt Rolls Royce or sits on her roof garden looking out over the backyards of New York, she can remember back to those miserable days when the pair of them had a country house, a city apartment, four cars, all mortgaged, and a bank account of

## *Doug and Mary and*

eighty dollars. They have spent their lives climbing to the peak of a large bank account and then sliding down rapidly into that void marked, simply, "No funds".

She can remember the delights of the first time she received a large salary. Without any trust in checks, she demanded it all in gold pieces, and that afternoon, in a small room in a Southern hotel, she played with her money. She piled the coin into tall stacks. She broke down the stacks to make castles. She demolished the castles for apartment houses. In a final gesture she threw the coin in the air, thrilled at being struck in the face by so much money.

And now Gil Boag, large and wide mouthed, and Gilda Gray, thin and wide mouthed, with their bank account, nourished on the love of audiences for the white legs of Gilda, desire most of all to retire to the pleasures of the Spanish apartment, to the quiet of the white colonial house with its painted bunches of roses, its Polish kitchen.





D. W. *Griffith*

**A** GRAVE man is David Wark Griffith. He is a grave director, a somber controlled individualist whose life was, is, and ever shall be motion pictures.

The face of Griffith stretches long and thin, with a high curved nose breaking over an underlip which has protruded into a natural shelf on which he rests an innumerable series of cigarettes. With a wide pull that deepens the vertical ruts on either side of his mouth, he smiles, his gray eyes at the same moment picking up details like a vacuum cleaner. They are grave eyes, possessing a quality that somehow has its nearest suggestion in "quizzical". Beneath a gray hat, a large hat, his hair, long and thin, spikes itself, breaking gently over his collar. His clothes are Griffith, revealing a man as unlike other movie men as his direction has been unlike that of other directors. He is an original.

The hat, collar and tie and shoes of this man have a permanence about them. The collar, a broad affair with deep points is several sizes larger than the Griffith neck, just as the innovations which he brought to the films ten or more years ago were too large for the neck of the business. His string tie,

## *Doug and Mary and*

carelessly knotted, fits the collar in the same proportion as the collar fits the neck, resulting in a defenseless display of collar ends, and a knot lingering on his chest. High and laced, his shoes have bright, brass hooks, with loops in the back, designed to aid in pulling them on but which serve merely to catch on his trousers. His chief sartorial distinction, however, is his massive hat, worn always when directing, and only leaving his head for a sudden spontaneous recognition when he sweeps it off with the gesture of a southern gallant.

Back in 1880 on a Kentucky farm a man stood on the front door steps, shouting to his neighbor three miles away:

“Baby’s here. Maw is fine.”

It was Colonel Griffith, otherwise known as “Roaring Jake”, bellowing to the county that his son, David Wark Griffith, was born. Only the signing of the peace papers a day sooner than he expected had prevented Roaring Jake from becoming a Confederate Brigadier General, the only man in the army who could shout to a soldier five miles away. The Colonel’s family stayed on the farm seventeen years after that informal birth an-

## D. W. Griffith

nouncement, while the baby outgrew his prettiness and his nickname of Sugar, developing instead a great roaring voice like his father's, and a reputation for unbeatable laziness. At length the family moved in to Louisville, where David worked in a dry goods store until he persuaded the owner of a book shop to hire him. As soon as he had read everything in the place, he was taken on as a reporter for the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, but finally went back to the book shop. Here he was advised to go on the stage. His career was short. He acted, and wrote and starved, all gracefully and continuously, until he finally anchored at the Biograph studios where he informed everybody that the directing was all wrong and this was how to do it.

There followed food and fame, and a heavy growth of eccentricities keeping pace with his development of new technique and of newer stars. To point a scene, the gangling, slow young man introduced close-ups. Then he brought in cut-backs and fade-outs, and hazy photography which he first effected by throwing layers of chiffon over the camera lens to make more angelic the innocent hair

## *Doug and Mary and*

of Lillian Gish. Those were his days of glory. He spilled forth the corked talents of Mary Pickford, the Gishes, the Talmadges. He made his great films of hokum, and honey, and horror, and called them "The Birth of a Nation", "Intolerance", "Broken Blossoms", "Way Down East".

When Mr. Griffith, the good gray director, works, he remains calm and quiet, much of his power over his actors lying in his voice, an amazing voice cutting through all the noise about him. It is deep and slow and grave with the resonance of an old-time Shakespearean actor. It is a voice to mold phrases, for recitations. That formal studied tone is utilized for such informalities as "Bring on the ducko, where is the vampo?"

He sits in a chair, any chair, always in the same position, leaning back, his right leg thrown over the left. His arms form into a pattern, the left one reaching across his chest hooked onto the right, which is lifted vertically upward as though he were a candlestick bearer. The upheld hand perpetually holds a cigarette, borrowed from a passing camera man. The cigarette, also, goes through a ritual; first come two or three puffs, and then

## D. W. *Griffith*

it goes into position until a long ash gathers. It is a pose and a prop, sending a gossamer gray film over the gray hat and the gray-brown skin. All is deliberate as though he were watching himself in a slow motion film. He hums, muted, "I got shoeses, You got shoeses".

If the scene is an intimate one, it is directed with Mr. Griffith drawn close, his face a dimmed mirror to guide the cast. Promptings form on his lips and die. "Come quicker, not quite so much support, good enough, and once again, please."

Once again. That is the Griffith law. Thirty times one morning four players practiced a two-minute sequence for the restaurant scene of "The Sorrows of Satan". Before then they had rehearsed it thirty-five times. The business demanded that the four eat sandwiches. Twelve times the property man supplied real chicken sandwiches, dressed with a lettuce leaf and a sliced pickle. The twelfth practice time, one of the girls appealed to him.

"My God, Mr. Griffith, can't I just eat the lettuce this time?"

## *Doug and Mary and*

"The lettuce is eaten last. Eat the sandwich and then you may go to lunch."

His life is divided into two parts. Either he is buried in the production of a picture, or he is buried in a vast pile of contemplated pictures. He will only go to theater if he is in search of a type. He follows odd persons for blocks. He moves his table in restaurants in order to be nearer to a type. He collects a dozen plots, decides on one, announces it, gathers a cast, and then sits around wondering whether one of the other eleven plots would not have been better. The business office usually prods him at that point, causing decision, and a Griffith movie is then actually set in motion, sometimes after a mere wait of nine or ten months.

Then work begins without relation to time clocks or the normal studio procedure. He holds secret rehearsals, keeps longer hours than any other director. For six weeks he drilled the cast of "The Sorrows of Satan", at Keen's Chop House in the large hall over the restaurant, instead of in the corners of the great Long Island studio of Paramount. Finally the cast, perfected in their business, were ordered to the studio where the camera

## D. W. *Griffith*

shot some scenes twenty-five times, and Carol Dempster was set through the motions of taking an ironing board from the closet to the table one hundred and twenty-five times.

By the time the picture had reached the last stages, the director had thought out five different endings, plot notions working through him like fungi in yeast cakes. Several of them he filmed, much to the dismay of the executives. Not only does he direct the movie, but he wants to cut and edit, write the sub-titles, and arrange the musical score. Brutality alone can keep him out of the projection rooms of the theaters. And even there he has entered. After one of his products had been on Broadway for six weeks, judged a box office success, he insisted on inserting new and better close-ups. He never writes finis to a movie.

Although others have made millions in the movies and put the millions in real estate, D. W. Griffith has made his millions and put them right back into movies. When he had the Mamaroneck studio, he played with his own money, made one picture a year, ordered extras by the hundreds, and if he could not decide on a scene, went out in his little sail-

## *Doug and Mary and*

boat while the overhead went merrily on. His only object is the making of pictures, no matter what the cost. When he did "Intolerance" he built the walls of Babylon three hundred feet high, and hired so many extras that his daily payrolls totaled \$12,000, to the horror of his backers. So fertile was his directorial imagination that the camera took several hundred thousand feet of film, and the picture in its rough state required seventy-five hours to be seen.

D. W. Griffith, the first of the great directors, has been so inextricably tied up with the development of movie style that Terry Ramsaye in his "A Million and One Nights —The History of the Motion Picture" referred to him sixty-seven times. The life of this man has been so concentrated in the movies that the minor facts of his outside life are few. He lives simply, quietly, alone since the separation from Mrs. Griffith, to whom he was secretly married back in the days when he engaged her under the name of Linda Arvidson for "The Adventures of Dolly", the first piece he ever directed. He goes to the opera occasionally, but his life is devoted to the attempt to recapture the glory

## D. W. *Griffith*

that was his in the triumphant days of "The Birth of a Nation".

To an interviewer who once asked Albert Gray, brother of D. W., what kind of a boy Griffith had been, the answer was:

"D. W. was a nut, and he's still a nut, but a mighty good nut."



*Malcolm St. Clair*

**I**NCHING into the niche wherein Ernst Lubitsch and his double chin are placidly at home, is a young director with a name as fancy as a souvenir pillow. Malcolm St. Clair sits now with those of that lone group who can make a movie mentally over twenty-one. Interlarded with a reserve formula for roughneck comedies starring Richard Dix, is a talent for molding comedies gay, worldly, sly. He can turn a smart phrase with a camera, salt drama with satire.

Malcolm St. Clair blocks out his images, treading consistently, harmlessly in the treacherous shoals of sex. Into his pieces he manages to slide a friendly sexiness which never, never approaches the pious sex offerings of the school of dramatic throbings. His sexiness is all airy and amusing, never concerned with the secret suppressions of the soul. Without three-minute kisses, without the roses and feathers and bright pink ribbands of movie symbolism, there is in his work sex which is as cool as the passion-life of a dandelion. For all this the critics praised him, lavishing upon him their choicest adjectives, and Mal St. Clair remembers and quotes what the critics wrote.

Everything comes to him as a picture. A

## *Doug and Mary and*

story told in the terms of the author's philosophy cannot hold him, for he cannot see a film in the arms of its theme. All must be torn away to leave just the simple sequence of events. Because of insistence upon the melody, he fails to hear the symphony. When the delicate comedy of Alfred Savoir, "The Grand Duchess and the Waiter", was assigned to him, the structure of the play had to be ripped down to the basic element, the framework.

"It's seven reels of seduction between two charming persons, Mal," explained Pierre Collins, then his scenarist.

For many years Cecil B. DeMille held, and with honor, the post of ideal movie director, standardizing glittering puttees, the megaphone, the special chair. But these days Malcolm St. Clair is beginning to fill in capacious, his extra curricular accomplishments so far being mainly in the setting up of a new correct Hollywood tailor, and of new and queer restaurants.

He is a tall man, loosely jointed, a figure apparently of only two dimensions, length and width. His nose, surprisingly small and humped, interrupts the broadness of his

## *Malcolm St. Clair*

face. When he was directing "The Show-Off", at the Astoria studio of Paramount one summer, he could always be distinguished under the purple lights as the only person on the set dressed carefully and elaborately in white flannels and sweater. In the noise of the carpenters there was lost the tinkling sound of the St. Clair watch, little and black, whose duties include the ringing out of the hour to him.

It was the pleasure that same year of this young man (he is still under thirty), to live on Park Avenue at the Park Lane Hotel, where every morning his liveried chauffeur called to take him to breakfast. The mulberry Packard took him 'way over towards the East River, past the girders of the Second Avenue Elevated, stopping at last in front of a dark Italian shop whose narrow confines were a hash of penny candies, cigars, bolognas and pale fruits. Through the tiny passageway St. Clair used to stride, flipping a greeting to the fat Italian woman whose lovely eyes watched the stove at the rear of the store. While the woman coddled a mushroom omelette for him, he sat in his corner seat at the further end of the long table

## *Doug and Mary and*

whose usual occupants were laborers from the First Avenue ditches. In Hollywood he discovered an equally dark restaurant whose cook was a Mexican Brillat-Savarin, author of an inspiring meat ball soup.

To all of his discoveries he introduces his small clique of friends. Wherever the long legs of St. Clair rest, the legs of his friends rest also, friends ever changing as he progresses. Only two details remain constant. He is always the sun king, the star, the moon; and always the court has its clown, the jester to whom the king feeds lines for further grotesques.

Ever since he was only a thin boy cartoonist in the sports department of a Los Angeles newspaper, Mal St. Clair has had his group and his fool. From his caricatures of prize-fighters, he was graduated into the position of gag man for Mack Sennett, doubling as a Keystone Kop in the same comic squadron which included Charlie Chaplin, Fatty Arbuckle and Chester Conklin. One of his duties was to kick Sennett in the pants, hard. Through his skill at that he rose to a directorship, and even these days he is pointed out as one fresh from Sennett comedies, although

## *Malcolm St. Clair*

he has not even talked to a bathing girl in seven years. After the Sennett lot, he moved to Film Booking Offices, making two-reel prize fight films until the moment of promotion to a full length picture starring Rin Tin Tin. At last Paramount signed him to direct Adolphe Menjou, with whom he made "Are Parents People?" "The Grand Duchess and the Waiter", "The Show-Off", and "A Social Celebrity". Through all this, Hollywood has watched him smash and rebuild his groups, gaining a circus each time with a new funny man.

It was through these groups, however, that Malcolm St. Clair strengthened his amazing power in motivating plots, in ornamenting tales. During his novitiate days, he rehearsed stories on his friends, crashing in blindly on conversations. At dinner parties a careless phrase would remind him of a story. He would jump up, his long arms beginning to gesture violently. To be sufficiently graphic, he would willingly swing on his hostess' chandeliers.

He is a glorious faker. Most of his stories, starting conservatively from true events, tack to fiction. With his fool, for instance,

## *Doug and Mary and*

he attended once a dancer's performance. The fool tossed from their box a corsage of roses which a member of the troupe picked up by mistake, smiling broad acknowledgment. To friends St. Clair related the incident thus:

"Jimmy slammed the roses at the wrong woman, and knocked off the hat of a woman in the next seat. Jimmy got excited then and lost his balance, and the next I knew he had landed on the stage. They brushed him into the orchestra pit, and whoops! he burst smack through the big drum."

All of this talent for invention makes him an impossible witness, but a fine director. Deleted from his stories are all descriptive terms, since everything must be action. His humor is confined to the visual just as his words are visual. A blow to him is always a sock. If his stories fail to win applause at the first telling, he changes the action, the timing, slashes at the decorations.

It is one of the peculiar boasts of St. Clair that he does not read books at all, not even those which he translates into movies. When he had just arrived at Paramount, Jesse Lasky wrote him a note requesting that he

## *Malcolm St. Clair*

come to the office for conference on the treatment of Carl Van Vechten's novel "The Tattooed Countess", to be known as "A Woman of the World". St. Clair had never met Mr. Lasky, nor had he read the book. His only preparation was the taking of Pierre Collins to the conference.

"Of course," began Mr. Lasky, "you know the story."

Nodding agreement, St. Clair suggested that Collins go over the points to refresh their minds, just broadly. Collins started, but he had not gone far before the director's round face showed excitement. He unwrapped his legs from the chair rungs. Then, no longer able to repress the fermenting ideas, his arms sketched in the air the first sequences. Lasky was tremendously impressed. Collins told more, broadly; but again St. Clair interrupted, this time summoning the head of the exploitation department.

"Now I've got a great idea, you put out a poster in yellow, showing the countess cracking a whip," said St. Clair, following with pointers so excellent that none but Collins ever knew that he was hearing for the first

## *Doug and Mary and*

time the tale of the amours of the tattooed countess.

With a wit tart as pickled lime, Malcolm St. Clair proceeded to film those amours. Although the newspaper and magazine critics repeatedly touted him for the direction of "An American Tragedy" after its sensational purchase by Famous Players-Lasky, it never occurred to St. Clair that he might read the book. Collins had read it. Now he is directing "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" with a sophistication unbelievable in this lanky discoverer of funny little restaurants and new tailors, this maker of movies, gay, worldly and sly.





*Carl Laemmle*

CARL LAEMMLE loves to grant interviews. Leaning back in a great gros-point chair, he likes now to tell how he did it, to remember that he has been building up his fortune in the movies for twenty years, fighting hard and trading closely.

He is a frail thin man now, with sunken cheeks, as bleached as the hair above. A haze of fine lines befogs his face. Over his strange ties, he has a way of looking completely childish and innocent as he says, "Isn't it a pity that we can't all be pleasant?" No matter how he feels, his face wears a smile. With the regularity of stock market reports, his eyebrows rise and fall, while from his facile mouth the words splash fast. At the ends of his sentences, his eyes grow eager, his mouth stretches widely, the brows rise rapidly over his glass, the whole effect being that of a physical exclamation point.

Simple, kindly, a little man only five feet high, he appears all sweetness and light in his queer big office in New York. Lost in the center of that formal room of gros-point chairs, polished mirrors and two toned taffeta draperies, reminiscent only of boudoirs and upstairs hat shops, Laemmle, defeated

## *Doug and Mary and*

in his attempts to snuggle into the largest chair of all, finishes by flinging one short leg over the chair arm, and there, in comfort in this semi-upside down position, he conducts his business.

He is the chief publicity lion of Universal Pictures Corp., of which he is president. The name of Laemmle is interchangeable with Universal. It has been the aim of the advertising departments to personalize the tremendous organization by featuring only the president. It all happened, this wise advertising, because R. H. Cochrane, now vice-president of Universal, had the theory years ago that the best way to put over a company was to make glamorous and famous its chief; to make patrons and exhibitors think of paternalistic Carl Laemmle when they thought of the Universal Corporation. Everything has been accomplished in the pleasant name of Carl Laemmle.

Wherever Carl Laemmle goes, and he is constantly traveling, he is known, wildly welcomed. In old-fashioned royal state Laemmle travels, dictating cables and telegrams all day and all night, keeping in touch with the studio and New York office. He is

## Carl Laemmle

always waiting for an important answer. Going and coming the traveling necessitates a flow of office welcomings. When he goes to Europe, a delegation of girls from the office crowd the staterooms, bidding good-bye to "Uncle Carl". When he returns the private office is stuffed with roses, the walls decorated with homecoming signs. The same thing happens when he arrives in Hollywood. It was the custom to have his train met by a whooping wild west parade until the expense of this ballyhoo so annoyed a young Scotchman, in charge of the arrangements, that he collected a list of the salaries paid the bandsmen, the cowboys and showed it to Laemmle. There were no more parades. Each had cost \$600.

No \$600 parades met the green little immigrant boy from Bavaria who walked off the gangplank of the steamship *Necker* in 1880. With Carl Laemmle were three other boys from his home town, each worrying about his lone fifty dollars. Since those terrible days in the steerage, all in that quartette have made their millions. In the usual pattern of the success story of the cinema, Laemmle scurried around until he found a

## *Doug and Mary and*

job running errands in a New York drug store. After that he earned enough to go to Chicago where, after several more odd jobs, he moved to Oshkosh, Wis., and a clerkship in a clothing store there.

The success story rests there for about twenty years, during which Carl Laemmle married, attained the managership of the store, and saved \$3600; rests until he was forty, little and round faced, and beaming, with some hair on his head. Oshkosh had nothing further to give him. In this difficulty he sought advice from R. H. Cochrane, in Chicago, who wrote advertisements for the store. Cochrane sent inspirational advertising to Laemmle. After receiving a plea for advice, he sent back a letter in this spirit:

“Dear Mr. Laemmle: A man who has not started in business for himself by the time he is forty will never make a big success. Very truly yours, R. H. Cochrane.”

Two days later Laemmle, who had taken twenty years to save several thousands of dollars, poked his face into the office of Cochrane in Chicago. The pair had never met.

“How do you do, Mr. Cochrane,” said Laemmle. “I have resigned.” He walked

## Carl Laemmle

out, and never reappeared with further explanation for seven months.

When he gave up the safety of the clothing business, he intended to open a five and ten cent store, just then demonstrating its evident practicability. While looking for a store site with a real estate agent, he passed, on Milwaukee Avenue, one of the five or six movie houses of Chicago. A queue extended half way down the block.

"Good business here," said Laemmle to the agent.

"Yeh. Now this store I'm showing you—"

"Let's watch here a while," suggested Laemmle.

The two watched, then paid a nickel each and sat through one reel. This business which constantly attracted changing customers appealed strongly to this man whose great selling argument was that the trousers would last a lifetime. From the manager of the house Laemmle learned that the box office took in \$12,000 a month, which in simple mathematics meant four times as much as he had been able to save in ten years.

Instead of a five and ten cent store the

## *Doug and Mary and*

clothing man opened "The White Front" movie house on February 26, 1906. Two months later he opened his second. Six months later his film exchange. His capital had dwindled to \$2800, and the market price was \$100 a reel. The film exchange began to kill him. He had difficulty obtaining films from the big companies, and suddenly the mild and beaming little man from Oshkosh turned fighter, manufacturing his own pictures.

Warring valiantly against the General Biograph and Kalem, the controllers of the movie business, he played David to the Film Company, composed of Vitagraph, Goliath of the big combination, sling stone at it until, in a semi-calm moment, he could establish his first famous brand, "The Imp". Gradually he drew to himself most of the independent producers to start a company of their own, pooling resources. On the major points the producers were in accord, but on the choice of a name there was grumbling. Every one wanted his own name featured. While the conference waited, Laemmle, looking out the window, saw a white horse drawing a wagon, prominently

## *Carl Laemmle*

labeled, "Universal Pipe Fitting Company". He turned to the meeting.

"How about the Universal Film Manufacturing Company?"

The company grew and grew through the magnificent trading of Carl Laemmle, who eventually bought out all the independents until he arrived in the pleasant position of having his own company, Universal Pictures Corporation. Now, at sixty-one, a movie magnate, Carl Laemmle grants interviews, a red carnation in his lapel, and his leg dangling over the arm of a gros-point chair.



*Estelle Taylor*

**T**WO vitalizing factors bumped into the life of Jack Dempsey seven years ago. Harry Wills attached himself, a black disfiguring wen onto the Dempsey career; and Estelle Taylor edged into the movies. Since that time the movies and Miss Taylor have so got into the affections of Dempsey that, when an important fight and a movie opening conflicted, Jack Dempsey walked down the aisle in dinner clothes to see D. W. Griffith's picture, "The Sorrows of Satan"; and not to see the Lithuanian Sharkey smash up that black disfiguring wen.

The movies were the core and covering of the Dempsey family once. There were days when both Estelle and Jack were acting—neither well. With skill only at blows, Dempsey was fooling about in serials; while Miss Taylor, young, techniqueless, shallied about in bad pictures. Then the pair married. Together they acted in "Manhattan Madness", undoubtedly one of the worst films ever produced.

Through some power not yet analyzed, Miss Taylor later unaccountably began to be an actress. John Barrymore picked this woman, whose face has a dark beauty, to be

## *Doug and Mary and*

that wicked Lucrezia in "Don Juan": ~~Frances~~ that she was chosen by Valentino to be the Duchess, the lead in "Cellini", which was to have been his next picture. Thence she took a standing jump to a well-advertised Famous Players-Lasky production, "New York", and now her jumps are of Kangaroo power.

For although Estelle Taylor's publicity in the past has always been mainly concerned with the fact that she was also Mrs. Jack Dempsey, the future publicity of Mrs. Jack Dempsey will be mainly concerned with Estelle Taylor. Of publicity there promises to be plenty, as both she and Mr. Dempsey have neat, keen and vastly sensible notions on publicity.

No matter how far Estelle Taylor finally alights, the huge and shapely figure of Jack Dempsey will be outlined behind her. Heavy, with the affability of a campaign manager, an aching desire to be liked, Mr. Dempsey has been the catalytic agent in her life. Even if completely unable to make himself anything more in the movies than a disgracefully bad actor, he transmuted her,

## *Estelle Taylor*

without changing himself, into an increasingly splendid actress.

Estelle Taylor has no history that includes



## *Jack Dempsey*

delicate reminiscences of convent days. There is nothing of the convent about her. Along with the natural shrewdness, the sharp sophistication of her, she possesses a cement-

## *Doug and Mary and*

ing fistful of hardboiledness. She knows there is no Santa Claus. Jack Dempsey can be kidded into believing that thick, five-pound steaks just happened, but Estelle is always conscious that the thick five-pound steak had to be bought. Wise-witted, she knows what she is doing and why. She wanted for long to be an actress, to be famous, to have the good things. When she married Jack Dempsey she had achieved none. Since then she has achieved them all. And with them came happiness and Jerry, the Greek.

Jerry, the Greek, is Dempsey's shadow, a jealous, intense shadow which takes care of the fighter. Behind Dempsey there shuffles Jerry, hunched, flatfooted, his arms hanging limply to his knees. His eyes follow Dempsey. His widespread cauliflower ears prick at the sound of the Dempsey voice. Jerry, the Greek, calls Estelle "Modom", but Jack is simply "Chompeen", and, in the intimate moments of cautious counseling, "Chomp". Whatever has occurred in the ring or out, Jack Dempsey will always be to Jerry, the Greek, "Chomp". Times upon

## *Estelle Taylor*

times Jerry swells out of character to be slapped down by Mrs. Dempsey.

Out at Colorado once, Mrs. Dempsey complained to Jack that Jerry, then busily upsetting the nursemaids, had lain in wait for her in the lobby to introduce three women to her. Black, grim, Dempsey grabbed hold of his shadow.

“Can I help it, Chomp? They pest me, Chomp, and pest me. Should I make them sore at me, Chomp?”

Usually, however, Mr. and Mrs. Dempsey suck in great thrills because they are famous. They love the crinkling feeling of suddenly hearing, “There’s Estelle Taylor and Jack Dempsey”. All this especially since the Philadelphia fight which had among its results both the loss of the championship and any suggestion of unpopularity.

Jack and Estelle amuse each other. They wisecrack continually, but the repartee always is unequal. It starts with Jack. Estelle follows with two short slaps. He comes back with a drawling slow one, and she punches out four swift ones which leave Jack bursting his chest by the power of toe laughs while his tongue tries to answer. To

## *Doug and Mary and*

Estelle every one is "Mr. Ginsberg". Whenever the pair are separated he calls her at midnight, and the pattern of their conversation is thus molded:

"Hello, Estelle?"

"Hello, Mr. Ginsberg?"

"You bet!"

"Mr. Ginsberg" began as a patter joke when the two were happily playing about at Saratoga Lake, where Jack was training for a fight. With nobody around for miles with the exception of Jerry, the Greek, they lived in a bungalow set about with acres of blackberry bushes, with hills in the soft blue distance. A friend dropped in to see them. He came upon Jack, careless in a ravaged sweater and black beard, Estelle in curl-papers and breakfast cap, and the two tossing blackberries into a bucket.

Deep in Jack Dempsey there lies a capacity for inspiring valiant affection. After the Tunney fight there came to his rooms a sick old man, Otto Floto, a dean of sports writers, who saw John L. Sullivan, trained on beer, knocked out by Corbett, and came now from Denver just to see his friend Dempsey fight. In denial of his reputation

## *Estelle Taylor*

as an "icewater frog", Floto cried at the sight of the torn Dempsey, cried "Good-by!" while Jack, through spongy lips, half smiled "Never mind, we had our fun".

Some time before the battle was actively decided upon, Estelle, loving clothes and jewels, saw a ring, a queer affair that was a large gold nugget shaped into a cynical Buddha. She had it sent home where Jack thought it hideous and expensive. At last he announced:

"Have it, mamma. Papa's going to fight."



*Emil Jannings*

EMIL JANNINGS loves to have his picture taken. Such intimate revelations as one of Herr Jannings eating noodle soup, or buying a green tie, or sitting at the wheel of his car, please this Rabelaisian gentleman almost as much as those revealing studies of him as Louis XV or as bull-necked Boss Huller.

This forty-year-old man, by exceedingly long odds the finest character actor in the movies, has demonstrated the fact that the theme of a film can successfully be diverted from fistfuls of guff, from romanticism, from the bunk of Great Lover rôles.

There has come to him the full flush of this world's excitement. He engulfs it all. Huge, thickbodied, a man for whom superlatives were constructed, Jannings has an oxen mammothness. In his beloved beige checkered overcoat, built on the lines of a marquee, he is a dressed Triton among the minnows. Above that coat the round healthy face of Jannings, with its great handfuls of chin, looks out upon this unbelieving world, amazed, interested, enjoying. His voice roars out, and the laughter starts in the diaphragm, spreading like water circles until it drowns him.

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When he laughs, his charm triples, that charm which is not a gentle, persuasive matter. It hits straight in the face. The distinctly innocent wonder of the man, with his lumbering awkwardness, his reactions apparently naive, his genius for acting, are mere adjuncts of a natural phenomenon. His is the soul of a monstrous fat man, a Gargantuan fat man whose soul has gone elephantiasis. The good nature, the pleasures of Falstaff belong to him. There is nothing thin about Emil Jannings.

His abounding health terrifies, overpowers. Although the answer is in his face, everyone asks him how he slept, and always he answers in a boom, "Wunderbar". This is his most usual word, for he finds his work, and his wife, and his friends, and his food, "Wunderbar". To keep him in that pleasant state, Mrs. Jannings has devised a menu. She gives him three dozen oysters liberally sunk in a whole bottle of ketchup, follows them with lobster, and then either *Koenigsberger Klops* or *sauerbraten mit kloese*, and finally platefuls of ice-cream. As tender and dutiful accompaniment, Pilsener beer in unlimited quantities.

## *Emil Jannings*

The theater was not at the beginning to be the life of this lusty fellow. He was Brooklyn born; his German parents took their two-year-old son back to the homeland, to potato cakes and his grandmother. As the boy grew older, he was eager for the sea, to be a brilliantly uniformed sailor, singing chanteys into the teeth of all gales, eager until that dismal day when he actually went to sea in a dull drill suit, to heave coal. After that one coal-shoveling experience, he ran into a troupe of actors playing in the south of Germany. There he spent his *Sturm und Drang* period. For twelve years in the provinces, he handed out programs before the performance, rushing backstage as the curtain rose to be villain, hero, moon or laughing peasant.

Out of that dimness, all the way to the bright light of Berlin, Max Reinhardt lifted him. He wrapped Jannings in great enveloping rôles, clothed him in Macbeth, Falstaff and Othello. Jannings burgeoned into one of the famous sights of Berlin. Wherever he went, the crowds recognized him, and clung to the bumpers of his low Mercedes. After Reinhardt, he placidly stepped into the movies. Suddenly UFA realized that an

## Doug and Mary and

amazing glory had descended upon its studios. As Louis XV he was cast in "Du Barry", and he was *wunderbar*. Put into "Ann Boleyn", he captured the picture. When he went into "The Tragedy of Love" as the pork-faced Ombrade, into "The Last Laugh" as the porter, into "Variety" as Boss Huller, into "Faust" as Mephisto, and each time changed the characterization, each time was bewilderingly fine, only one result could be the outcome. Hollywood would offer him so much money that he would not dare refuse.

Famous Players-Lasky Corporation signed Emil Jannings. With frantic trumpet-blowing they brought him here, a jovial gentleman with a tall, blond German actress wife who once had been the wife of his fellow actor, Werner Kraus. She abandoned musical comedy to be guide, interpreter, business executive and brain to Jannings. Whenever he left his rooms at the Hotel Biltmore he called out, "Gus-sie", and she came along. She took him to the large and elegant luncheon, given in his honor at the Ritz-Carlton, the luncheon at which he sat, huge, red-faced, smiling, while the officials buttered him with praise to the undercurrent of Mrs.

## *E m i l J a n n i n g s*

Jannings' translation into German. That night again, she translated for him at a private dinner, with a menu carefully designed, at Roberts'.

And of all the moments in that great day of food and hymns, the greatest arrived late that night when Jannings, in pajamas of yellow, strode to the half unpacked trunk in the corner. There he dug down deep until he dredged out two quart bottles. Taking a rye loaf from the table, he cut off a thumb-thick slice, and then, from one of the bottles, lifted shining spoonfuls of Schmaltz, which is just goose grease and pork fat boiled down. Through the rooms he wandered, sighing loudly, announcing to the corridor and his Gussie:

“Schmaltz! Ach, now I am quite happy!”

Then came the trip to Hollywood; Jannings and his great trunks; warnings to beware of being rubbed into Hollywood star-dust. Friends advised him that attempts would be made to turn him, who had played Mephisto and Tartuffe, into a Yale boy, a cowboy, a Great Lover.

“But I,” exploded Jannings, “am Jan-

## *Doug and Mary and*

nings. I am Jannings to Germany. I go to Hollywood. I am still Jannings."

He went to Hollywood while the editorial councils floundered about for a story big enough. Rumors were abroad that he would play "The Hairy Ape". Jim Tully suggested that Jannings would be masterly as the hero of Tully's own novel, "Jarnegan", in which the German would play that Celtic carnal movie director, murderer, jailbird, Hollywood's greatest, a sneering drunken genius. Finally, announcements were thrown out, the first American product would be "The Man Whom God Forgot", title supplied by Bruce Barton, who is called in for suggestions whenever information about God is needed. Jannings objected to the story. Then a white-haired boy thought of a tremendous scheme. A tale would be built in which the three greatest characterizations of Jannings would be the plot's pillars.

The scenario was so expertly managed that the magnificent Jannings could skillfully proportion his sequence into the playing once more of the king in "Deception", the lusty Boss Huller of "Variety" and the old man

## *Emil Jannings*

of "The Last Laugh". It was just the history of a solid German-American family man, and a Chicago jade who broke and dishonored him. When the picture was over, no title was found blatant enough to overcome the fact that Jannings, although the finest character actor, was still big and fat and forty. The difficulty was solved by stealing from Samuel Butler, and the piece was called "The Way of All Flesh", with *Flesh* pointed up in blackened type.

Once the picture was out of the way, Jannings again took his pleasure. He ordered out his roadster, and tore up and down the boulevards, his face stern, his underlip full, protruding, as he fought each car on the road for the lead. None should pass him. Jannings was king.

Second to speeding, he loves prize fights. At every one in Berlin, Emil Jannings and his beige checked overcoat were seen in a ringside seat. When Jack Dempsey came to Berlin, the pair sparred together, had their pictures taken together in green tights. Clapping and roaring, he attends the races, betting wildly, celebrating the winners in good, light Pilsener. Unfortunately he can

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no longer get his beer, but he is able to eat in Hollywood what he ate in Berlin. For three days after he walked down the *Deutschland* gangplank, he cabled to his cook:

“Come immediately Hollywood. Must have koenigsberger Klops. Jannings.”





Cecil B. DeMille

**A**FABULOUS DeMille has been pieced together by Cecil Blount DeMille, a mosaic whose tiles are Yes-men, and special chairs, and purple velvet work-suits. Thousands of jokes have been brought forth whose only nub were those Yes-men, and a thousand more jokes pointed at those old society dramas of his, with drawing rooms cozy as Central Park, with magnificent bathrooms large as Coney Island swimming pools. Through it all the fabulous DeMille goes calmly on, unshaken by the laughter of the sophisticates, accepting jibes as compliments. No matter that the smarties make comic material of him; he is still dominant, as inescapable as a red fire engine.

DeMille looks like action. Large, broad shouldered, preposterously healthy, his face and scalp have been burned a dark red-brown, his almost totally bald head rimmed by a band of curly gray hair. It makes a rather amazing contrast, his bulldog face, his directorial clothes of green or purple velvet, his legs neatly wrapped in leather puttees. Low-voiced, as he talks his arms jab the air quickly in the short sharp strokes of the body punches of a Dempsey.

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DeMille is no simple creature whose mind travels only canyons of movies and money. He is as many-sided as a polygon. He has his yacht, the *Seaward*, which once sailed Northern waters as a Gloucester schooner and, himself the skipper, he races it, occasionally winning. He has his speed boat. There are the four DeMille children, three of whom are adopted. There are his two rare collections, one of them of beautiful jewels, the other of old Indian relics, squat shaped bowls and arrows greened with an antique scum, collections fine and discriminating, tracked down by their owner. There is the DeMille estate, "Paradise", set deep in a valley of the San Bernardino Mountains, a place of 10,000 acres whose orange groves are worked by two hundred laborers. The valley can be reached only through one pass, and whenever its proprietor grows sick of people he shuts the pass and is alone with his 10,000 acres.

When DeMille comes out of the valley, he returns to his hill home in Hollywood and the further manufacture of pictures for which he believes he is divinely inspired. To illustrate heaven's coöperation, DeMille brings forth an incident in the making of

## Cecil B. DeMille

“The Ten Commandments”. The company had gone to the desert for the massed and beautiful scenes of Moses on the rock. Thousands of extras had been transported to the desert, all were ready, dressed in their Israelite clothes; but the day was dark. Facing a great loss of time and money, the assistant director dismissed the extras. But as they turned away, DeMille suddenly ordered them to remain. He grouped the horde, stationed his assistants on the outskirts, placed Moses in position on the rock. Everybody waited. In fifteen minutes the sun squeezed through, throwing a baby spotlight over the shaggy head of Moses. “Camera”, shouted DeMille.

When Will Rogers heard of this divine collaboration, he said, quite simply, “I like the part God wrote best.”

When DeMille works with God, the studio develops the hushed and serious air of a cathedral. During the production of “The King of Kings”, his movie based on the Life of Christ, the day’s labors began only after morning prayers. H. B. Warner, playing the rôle of Christ, never was allowed to speak while in make-up, and in those free moments

## *Doug and Mary and*

on the set a veil hid his face. So ceremonial, so consecrated was the studio that even a copy of the New York Evening Graphic, with its pink composite photographs, was considered bad taste. Profanity of course was outlawed, the moral tone reaching such a level that Dorothy Cummings had to sign a seven years' contract expressly stating that she would not become involved in any divorce proceedings or scandal cases before DeMille would give her the rôle of the Virgin Mary.

A time came in the course of filming when Miss Cummings had a scene of agony. But, although she had been excellent in the other sequences, she was completely unable to emotionalize sufficiently. DeMille said pleasantly that she could try again the next day. The following morning the girl failed to appear. An assistant director informed DeMille that Miss Cummings had found her father dead in bed.

“Tell her, please, to come to the studio,” ordered DeMille.

Miss Cummings reported, put on her make-up, the cameras were in position; and, under the gentle persuasion of the director, she poured forth more than enough agony.

## *Cecil B. DeMille*

It was a touch of the Belasco in DeMille, of the Belasco who breaks down his actresses until they can act to his measure.

The life of Cecil DeMille has shot off as a tangent from association with Belasco, for Henry C. DeMille, father of Cecil and William, had been both Columbia University professor and partner of Belasco. His mother, famous as an author's agent, had matched her Jewish brains in the same field with Elizabeth Marbury. Living around the theater, Cecil was absorbed by it, entering the Sargent Dramatic School after his formal education at military school. He did everything, acting, writing, managing, producing. The old programs of "The Return of Peter Grimm", written by David Belasco, show a line crediting the story's conception to Cecil DeMille. He went out over the country acting first in minor rôles, then striding up to leading parts. It was while with the Frohman company that he married Constance Adams of Orange, N. J., whose family was a branch of the Massachusetts Adams'. The pair tramped the land, and it is now the boast of DeMille that he can name the other hotel in every town in the United States. Mrs.

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DeMille adds plaintive memories of the difficulties which she encountered with the clerks of those hotels because of the pets of Cecil, two little squirrels in a basket cage.

From Broadway and the producing of acts for Jesse Lasky, DeMille journeyed to Hollywood in 1913. As Samuel Goldwyn said, after he had viewed the manger scene in the "King of Kings":

"Cecil started the same way; he too began in a stable. Only with me."

The stable was that old building since known as the Lasky barn. DeMille had gone west to make "The Squaw Man", with Dustin Farnum, for the just organized Lasky Film Company whose principals were DeMille, Goldwyn and Lasky. In those days directors raced through their productions, but none faster than the husky son of Henry DeMille. He had not yet begun the piecing together of the fabulous DeMille. When temperament reared its ugly head, DeMille punched it in the nose. The custom then was to spend two weeks on each picture; but, at the Lasky studio after a while, several of the less important directors in an excess of artistic desire and laziness began to take four

## *Cecil B. DeMille*

weeks for a film. DeMille stopped that quickly, by making two good pictures at the same time in two weeks. With Fannie Ward in the part of the white woman who bargained disastrously with a Japanese he made, in the daytime, "The Cheat", a thriller whose big scene came when Sessue Hayakawa branded the white shoulders of Miss Ward. At night he worked with Wallace Reid on "The Golden Chance". The three, Reid, Miss Ward and DeMille, all bounced smartly upward on the impetus of those two movies with their snapping course of action. He always wants action, on the lot, in the scenario. Years later he bought "Man-slaughter" without ever reading it, because it had been pointed out to him as the story of a district attorney prosecuting the girl he loved.

An egotist, freely admitting that nobody about the studio can possibly understand as much about movies and the public as himself, DeMille organizes with an unbelievable exactness. It takes executive ability to group those vast DeMille mobs.

During the fourteen years since his "stable" days, DeMille has cultivated the habit of

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carrying gold coins in his pockets, of wearing slightly odd clothes, of performing the acts of his life with a certain grave theatricality. Along with those minor details string such a major detail as the fact that he has made many stars, much money, and fifty-three pictures. He is president of one bank and director of another. His pictures have been successful, always an exaggeration; for in his mind's eye he sees everything as more tremendous than reality. Like his pictures DeMille is successful; and, like the recounting of one of his own movie plots, Cecil DeMille sounds like an exaggeration, more tremendous than reality.





*Joseph M. Schenck*

ALL roads at United Artists lead to Joseph M. Schenck. All roads at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lead to Nicholas Schenck. There are no detours. At the terminal of each road is a Schenck with millions, power, a wife, a blinded tiny mother of eighty-five, a love of poker, and most important of all, each other. Through everything the brothers share alike, even to their dependents. Joe hires Nick's dependent and Nick hires Joe's.

They look alike. Joe is a big man with an acre of forehead, an immense flat face, a massive nose and ridges, topped by hair carefully draped above the broadened skull. He talks with a heavy accent. He mixes his tenses, but what he says means something. In spite of the coaxings of Norma Talmadge, whose private name is Mrs. Schenck, clerks still sell him yellow overcoats, black shoes with gray tops, mauve shirts, and brown spats; and, until brown derbies were pushed into the equipment of the comics along with trouser clips, Joseph Schenck always bought brown derbies. Joseph rarely is dressed without his spats, and Nicholas never without his cane. The service elevator boys at the Plaza Hotel, however, can remember Joseph when

## *Doug and Mary and*

he rode down from his suite of rooms to run off fat around Central Park Reservoir in the early mornings, distinguished by a dreadful sweater.

The Schencks know everybody, the underworld and the upper, both mixing in politics, Nicholas in New York, Joseph in California, as the chairman of the Republican County Committee. Whatever it is, business or politics, the Schenck boys boss, Nick through a black telephone, Joseph through a gilded one.

The golden telephone in the office of Joseph Schenck stands there a weapon for his violent rages, for he is the terrible tempered Schenck. The staff watches with fear, even the lowliest office boys aware that women have been bodily thrown from the room, the telephone torn from its moorings, the glass top of the desk banged so hard that it smashed. Busy as he is, he loves to play the distracted business man, interrupting himself to settle a million dollar deal, to read a letter, to call a star, to dictate a letter, to tell some one to go to hell. And then he turns about with "And now what is it". The organization members answer, "There are these three things, Mr.

## *Joseph and Nicholas Schenck*

Schenck", and he replies, "Yes, No, and I think that's awful".

The early days of the Schenck brothers, like the early days of other well-known men of the movies, are befogged, the brothers apparently being born aged eighteen. Coming from Russia, the Schencks were a couple of wild Jewish boys in the Bowery, living with their mother, who now has a large and beautiful home in Brooklyn where every week her daughter reads her a five-page letter from her son Joseph in Hollywood, telling her the details of his business deals. The boys lived in the streets with their gang until Joseph finally found a job, doling out pills and powders behind the scarred counter of the little drug store under the L in the Bowery, known modestly as Number Six, around the corner from Nigger Mike Salter's where Irving Berlin was the singing waiter. From the Bowery, Joseph moved to a Yonkers drug store, and the feeding of chocolate sodas to suburban children.

At length the Schenck boys collected enough money to buy an amusement park on the New Jersey side of the Hudson, advertising "The Biggest Schooner of Beer for a



*Nicholas Schenck*

## *Joseph and Nicholas Schenck*

Nickel". They still own Palisades Park, whose flashing lights light the night. Almost every night now Nicholas with his cane and his guests crosses the river to refresh himself with the sound of carnival. Strolling about, the manor lord, he chats a moment with the gatekeepers. If his guests are lucky enough to win a basket of fruit by shooting ducks, Nicholas passes down the line of concessionaires, handing each an apple or a pear. For a week after an expensive new scenic railway was installed, the ticket collector had a visitor, a large and jovial gentleman with a stick, who watched with increasing pleasure the torture-seekers climbing into cars.

The brothers then came to the theater, joining the organization of Marcus Loew. Joseph eventually branched into independent motion picture producing, making Evelyn Nesbit's movies, and then Norma Talmadge's, until he finally arrived as grand marshal of United Artists. While Nicholas remained in the Loew organization until now he is executive vice-president with most of the power. Joe is king at United Artists, Nicholas czar at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer; and the brothers play on opposite sides of the star

## *Doug and Mary and*

question. For the industry has a schism. Lined on one side are the stars demanding tremendous salaries, wanting a free hand. And on the other side the producers in phalanx array minimize salaries, contending that the stars are fighting against the best interests of the industry. Nicholas is a general with the producers, Joseph, the adventurous, a rebel with the stars, offering enormous sums for them to join his organization. His organization is composed of stars who have pooled their distributing expenses without limiting their individual production ambitions. When Richard Rowland first heard of the formation of United Artists, he said. "So the lunatics are running the asylum".

When Joseph Schenck arrived to take charge of the asylum under the title of chairman of the Board of Directors, the company had only Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford and Charles Chaplin. Since that day in October, 1924, he alone, by the power of his tongue, by his hypnotic gambler's touch, mushroomed the list until Gloria Swanson, John Barrymore, Norma Talmadge, Buster Keaton, Corinne Griffith, Gilda Gray, Dolores Del Rio, Herbert Brenon, Edwin

## *Joseph and Nicholas Schenck*

Carewe and Fred Niblo dashed from the safe confines of other companies, eager to be their own producers. But they were not the only ones to succumb to the guttural inflections of Mr. Schenck.

Samuel Goldwyn came over to play in the Schenck back yard, bringing with him Vilma Banky and Ronald Colman. And then, after months of talk, Morris Gest of the wide Windsor tie and the crushed black fedora went movie. Much strategy was plotted to snare him, the minutiae of maneuver born in that acre of forehead. One gambler tipped off another to take a chance. Joe told Morris that he could make a tremendous amount of money, or else he would make a guaranteed sum of \$250,000 a picture, one a year for six years. And Gest journeyed to Hollywood.

Behind all this stands the major fact that Joseph Schenck is a gambler, knowing the price of everything and the value of everything. He loves cards and Nicholas loves horses. Stud poker is the game for Joseph. There were famous games in his Louis Seize living room in his suite at the Plaza. His fat flat face laughing, his vest open, legs spread

## *Doug and Mary and*

apart, his head framed in long red roses, Joe Schenck played with Irving Berlin, Al Woods and Adolph Zukor. At one of those games, Woods dealt Schenck a card face down, then three more face up, and the fifth face down. Without looking at the last card, Schenck shoved across his chips.

“Thirty-eight thousand dollars,” he said quietly, turned up the card and won the money.

For the Schencks have no frustrations. Powerfully, vitally, they smashed through from the East Side, absorbing money, the Schenck shrewdness curling around the industry like a giant lip over a cup rim.





*John Barrymore*

**I**N the old days, when notices still read "Posed for the camera", the movies put out their tentacles in the direction of John Barrymore. They pulled him in, but only temporarily. Now the movies own the most brilliant actor of the stage, own him through purchase, for Barrymore asks reasonably why he should ever consider going back to the stuffiness of an actor's dressing room when Hollywood will lavishly supply him with leisure, money and a yacht.

Because of the pressure of those three tentacles the Barrymore figure, wafer slim, remains in the movies, handsome movies, chiefly devoted to kisses, to beautiful posings of the slim Barrymore profile. Instead of bumping against scene shifters back stage, he knocks against extras and cameramen as he wanders about the studio. Sometimes his air is that of a rather melancholy ghost in sloppy clothes, his face white, anæmic, his eyes avid, scraping. The words shake from his mouth as though slung from a pepper pot, stinging, incoherent, ungentle, much slower than he wants. The sentences, jumbled with vile words, are tied together by hells and damns and oh, my Gods.

John Barrymore lives in Hollywood,

## *Doug and Mary and*

touching up the color of his life by a certain perversity, a perversity which has given rise to a hundred anecdotes, most of them ending in gag lines. When he played in New York, he had three homes because, he said, he couldn't bear just one. He dislikes press agents, one of whom he discharged with this last thrust, "I am only interested in magnates and women, and you are neither." Frequently late, partly on principle, he once told an enraged manager, "You ought to be sorry you haven't more Barrymore to wait for." Above all else he despises patrons of the arts and their liquid tones in talking of the actor's soul. John Barrymore kicks out softness. After the first performance of "Peter Ibbetson", during which the scenery managed to fall down repeatedly, Constance Collier who played the Duchess of Towers to the Ibbetson of Barrymore, came to him thrilled, crying with excitement.

"It was beautiful, and if there's such a thing as a spirit coming back," she said, "then I know Du Maurier was here to-night."

"If he was," said Barrymore shortly, "he got hit on the head."

## *John Barrymore*

The lives of great lovers all remind us that eventually John Barrymore will play them in the movies, steeping each in a fantastic romance. While others may play marines and clerks and subway guards, husbands and fathers, stock brokers and just young men in love, John Barrymore settles into philanderings on such a scale as that in "Don Juan", when his romantic appeal was completely expressed in one hundred and twenty long-run kisses.

In spite of such drool, John Barrymore has been at moments the most brilliant actor of the screen, playing his scenes so quietly, so delicately that they tore at the throat, playing with a subtlety that spread like butter on bread over those unfortunate bits of ham which have been hashed into his movie work. With an amazing deliberateness, he shovels in the sauerkraut. Art is art but audiences are greedy for sauerkraut. "They love it" is his only comment.

He delights not only in being lover, but even more in being rogue. If at all possible, his pictures include sequences of physical torture wherein Barrymore, the beautiful, changes to a thing of physical anguish. In

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“The Sea Beast” there was that fearful episode during which Barrymore, down in the hold of the whaling ship, has his torn leg amputated with a hot knife, the cords of his neck standing out stiff in pain. In “Don Juan” there was that much milder spasm in which he was caught in the flooded prison cell, this movie having as further attraction a short scene in which he rescues the girl from the revolving rack as he twists his face into a sudden likeness of that old favorite character of his, Mr. Hyde, whose other half was Dr. Jekyll. One of the distinctive achievements of Barrymore in Hollywood was his masterly performance of the title part in “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde”, and ever since details of that masterly performance have spotted his characterizations. He is always playing Barrymore and Hyde, shifting easily from the charm of lover to the terror of devil, with eyes that are holes of horror. “Give them more torture,” advises Barrymore, “the public loves it.”

What the public misses, however, is the sight of Barrymore, flavorous and gay, guying those rôles of his as he works on the set. He dies gracefully or fearfully, jumps over

## *John Barrymore*

balconies, kisses and kills, thrillingly, vitally. And he smashes the illusion with outrageous words! In those days when audiences could hear him, asides shot out in the same manner, for Barrymore cannot stop them. If some one annoyed him in the front ranks by coughing loudly he inserted some searing sentence; but if, in simple exuberance, he was feeling exceedingly fine, he added stinging words to those of the playwright. In one drama a tender death scene had the lines "Good-by and give my love to all your dear ones". To this farewell Barrymore pinned on a flounce ending with "and don't forget also Uncle Luke with the stomach cough as he was a great old hacker".

But John Barrymore continues to live among the pleasures of Hollywood, which has so lavishly supplied him with leisure, money and a yacht.



*Irving Thalberg*

OUT of the dulness of middle class complacency there has come an unnatural phenomenon, known in Hollywood as "Irving Thalberg, the boy producer". For six years Irving Thalberg has been showing the wise ones how to make successful pictures, a process which provides him with yearly earnings mounting beyond a quarter of a million dollars. He is responsible for the spending of twenty million dollars a year, the production budget of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios. In his six years of movie service he has lavished over a hundred million dollars. Irving Thalberg is only twenty-eight.

A fluent quality from within has carried him upward with tremendous and amazing speed, the friction of that flight stripping his life and personality of those curious highlights so normal in the lives and personalities of the other enormously successful men. Things have happened to them. But Thalberg stands sharply, clearly, like a peeled willow wand, so smooth and bumpless that no broken strands of bark are left on which legends may catch. There are no prongs on which may hang gay, strange and amusing anecdotes. His life has been too busy with

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business. The only color lies in his great Marmon car, yellow as butter.

The story of Irving Thalberg must be told as a story of youthful success, but one rather unlike that of the others. It is a tale devoid of tragedy, of comedy, of conflict and battling, a tale even whose background is bleached of vitality when compared with the rich pasts of Zukor, of the Schenck brothers, of Lasky. They all had pasts, violently weaved with raw colors; he had only the strength of a thin black line of determination.

There are no pathetic passages to be written about him, describing a little scared boy from Russia, landing here to be engulfed in the East Side. There are no spots of realism centering about an orphan newsboy, longshoreman or bum. No bits can be put in about a pants finisher's dreams of riches as he pulled out basting threads. Nothing.

Irving Thalberg never starved, never supported a widowed mother, never dreamed, never gambled with all at stake. But at twenty-two he knew how to make successful pictures better than any of the mob of directors, writers, artists, and business men whose

## *Irving Thalberg*

own success stories are alive with thrilling incident.

It is that negation of experience which forms the major pillar in the uniqueness of Irving Thalberg, the thin young boy who was the chief factor behind the critical and financial victories of "The Big Parade", "The Merry Widow", and "Flesh and the Devil", to choose only a few of his productions. When "The Big Parade" proved good, the publicity naturally flowed towards Laurence Stallings, toward King Vidor, toward John Gilbert and Renee Adoree; when the hurrahs rose about "The Merry Widow", acclaim went to Erich Von Stroheim, to Mae Murray and John Gilbert; when "The Scarlet Letter" arrived, the praise was all for Victor Seastrom and Lillian Gish. And all the time the heads of other companies would have been content with just the services of Irving Thalberg. He made the pictures. None knows whence he drew his knowledge. This is his history.

In Brooklyn, in a decent two-family house, lived William and Henrietta Thalberg. William, born in Germany, was a real estate agent. In 1899 to the couple was born a son,

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whom they named Irving. The boy grew up a frail sickly child, playing peacefully with the children on the block, going to public school and then to high school without ever in the slightest way distinguishing himself. When Irving arrived at his senior year in high school a serious illness kept him home, and, unwilling to try to catch up with the class, he prevailed on his parents to allow him to work. He wanted to be a stenographer.

After two or three jobs, Irving Thalberg at nineteen became the secretary to the secretary of Carl Laemmle, president of Universal. The boy who wouldn't study suggested sagacious business notions to Carl Laemmle, and soon Thalberg was taken to California as Laemmle's secretary. There, at Universal City, studio affairs were in so chaotic a state that suddenly, to further the chaos, Thalberg was no longer Laemmle's secretary. He was general manager of the studio. Books had never taught him much, nor had he learned about pictures from watching or talking to the men who made them; but he understood about cost sheets and overhead.

The studio was excited when Thalberg, a

## *Irving Thalberg*

twenty-three-year-old manager, removed Von Stroheim from the direction of "Merry-Go-Round" after it was five weeks in production. Thalberg had watched him use up 83,000 feet of film, costing \$220,000, just for the first scenes. It did not seem to Thalberg that such extravagance should go unchecked. Freshly, smartly, he ordered the director out, put Rupert Julian in; and, in spite of the switching of captains in midsea, the picture was both successful and good. Thalberg, the kid secretary, had proved himself. From Universal he later moved to the organization of Louis B. Mayer, and, when Mayer merged with Metro, the unfailing business head of Thalberg went along.

Nervous, skinny, mostly dark eyes and no body, Irving Thalberg works sixteen hours a day, the anteroom outside his office stuffed with thirty or forty persons of whom only about twenty-five a day see the little boss. They come to ask his advice about titling, casting, editing, cutting. He tells his rich stars how they may become richer. He gives opinions on real estate sites. He thinks out schemes to hold the exhibitors. He helps along everywhere, miraculously coördinating

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his materials for the further truth of those advertised words, "It Looks Like Another Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer year". Good or bad, the Thalberg product is successful. He never makes a flop.

His theory of production lies mainly in the initial premise that the star counts, and not the story. All that he wants is a plot to be woven about the personality of a contract player. Although he orders scenarios made from Tolstoy novels, he does it because the name of Tolstoy is good for the publicity. The finished film will be not so much a story by Tolstoy as a story of Lon Chaney. Whether he uses Conrad or Stallings, all that Thalberg ultimately desires is a background for the beauties of Norma Shearer, Lillian Gish and Greta Garbo.

He explains all this hastily, rapidly, to the authors whom Metro brings steadily to the coast; and, while he rushes along, the writers notice that his fists clench so tightly that the nails bite into his palms. He grasps the nub of a plot quickly, and expects others to do the same. In a loud voice, he will tell how the villain chased the girl around the table, then the door burst open, and the hero ran in.

## *Irving Thalberg*

There Thalberg stops, his voice dropping to a low conversational tone, and he starts off on another topic, proceeding on the principle that every one of any intelligence knows exactly what happened after the hero entered. Some one important awaits him, and each moment spent describing a known fact is a waste of salaried time.

So absorbed has he been with such problems in the past six years that he has accumulated no fantastic bits for those few hours outside his office. He lives with his mother and father and sister, he delights in dinner clothes and swank movie openings, in driving his gay car, loaded with friends at three or four in the morning, and then racing with taxicabs.

They call him a great guy, this frail-faced man, stubborn and confident, this maker of successful movies whose life has been a cold monochrome, stretching from Brooklyn to Hollywood.



S. L. Rothafel

**I**T has never been expertly analyzed, whether Roxy actually believes in the tonic qualities of the milk toast he hands out so lavishly, whether those cloudy gray eyes of his rolling lazily under lids thick and semi-closed will ever reveal that he considers it all just further helpings of what he calls, variously, applesauce, bunk or boloney.

He is a tired man with a skin grayed and lined, a squat, paunchy man, heavy, with a pursed mouth from which the words emerge childishly, with a naïve inflection. High up in the massive block that is the Roxy Theater, there is a large beautifully-paneled room with a desk, great and shiny, behind which sits Roxy, pitying himself because he cannot find an assistant to do those things that have made Roxy Roxy. He is a sob sister, sentimentalizing himself and all the rest of this world's inhabitants. In his theater he has on constant display the vibrant heart of Roxy, open as the strings of a mandolin. The sweetest songs are played on it with a gentle touch of melancholy.

At forty odd, he sees himself a man run down in the service of a cannibalistic public. "Look what this theater has done to me," he

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points out plaintively, touching his graying hairs. He serves the motion picture public, that insatiable vampire, sucking the life-blood of Samuel Lionel Rothafel. This public character possesses, however, a fathomless and sincere love for his enemy, a love warm and abstract. For that shapeless enemy whom he addresses over the radio as "Hello Everybody!" he will pitch himself off emotional cliffs, laughing or weeping automatically. When Roxy thanks a friend, God and Love and the Sermon on the Mount are all inextricably mixed. It overflows into his correspondence. His business thank-you notes to women start with "My dear Little Girl" and end "Yours truly, S. L. Rothafel".

But friends and enemies alike agree that in this man, whose external characteristics are a sob in the throat, a passion for frankfurters and sauerkraut, navy blue clothes, dark ties and nicknames on five minutes' acquaintanceship, there are such inner qualities as an amazing generosity, persistence, a feeling for beauty, and tremendous organization abilities.

In his official capacity of slush arranger, Roxy works constantly, intensely, giving him-

## *Roxy*

self playtime only in those all-night Sunday evening poker sessions at his Riverside Drive home, and in those sudden escapes to baseball games or the race track. So hard does he work at his task that he spends several nights a week in his private apartments attached to the theater office. There his place is managed by a butler whose uniform is distinguished by gilt buttons embossed handsomely with a red R, and by a white capped chef. Friday night he always stays at the theater, as that is the focal point of the week. After the regular performance, everybody gathers to work until early morning.

It is a violent scene then in that great bowl of an auditorium, with the little ballet dancers standing around, kimono on shoulder, the electricians, the orchestra players, the costumers all watching, listening to a stubby man down in front blazing with orders and enthusiasm, getting plaintive.

“Can’t you do that little thing for me?” he pleads. “Must you, Sol, play the piccolo right there?”

Saturday at one o’clock the first show is on. Way up in the last row of the uppermost balcony Roxy sits, like a Supreme

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Court Justice, or a stuffed pigeon, his staff circled beside him. Under his chair coils an elaborate affair, known as "The Public Address System", through which Roxy yells his frustrations. After the performance a convention is held on the stage for the purpose of a general bawling-out. He is not pathetic then. At last Roxy retires to rest for an hour, winding up with a short workout on the roof, where the residents of the Hotel Manger can manage a vision of Roxy in sweatshirt and running pants doing his one-two-three exercises. At four o'clock he is once more ready to view the show, this time, however, from a loge. Nothing goes wrong. Otherwise the sobs of Roxy would be too unbearable. A faithful loving heart broken on the rack of organization indifference! It has never happened.

Every young reporter interviews Roxy at some time, for with his pail of tears he has edged himself into the meager band of really distinguished public entertainers. He is the leader of presentations, the originator of the atmospheric prologue which is merely a prologue setting the emotional pace of the movie following it. In the olden days the films

## *R o x y*

were bolstered with Japanese Tumblers and The Refined Swiss Bell Ringers, but since Roxy waterwinged to the crest of the wave Mischa Levitska has played at this theater, Frank Harling has arranged a score, and Fritz Kreisler has been asked to play for Roxy's audiences, fattening movies whose dullness has a shellacked veneer of smartness.

It is years since Roxy's first interview, dated in the times when the pianists trebled through "Hearts and Flowers" for every sequence which the Sousa marches did not fit. All the interviews have markings as definite as ink spots. For whenever he gives public utterance, his speech centers about his plans, always a topic of general interest. In that first interview in Forest City, Pa., not far from Scranton, Pa., he announced that he was offering an extra special feature, solos, to demonstrate the remarkable talent of his musical staff every evening, in addition to the regular performance, for five cents. As he rose in theater presentation he confided his successful theories of institutionalized movie houses, his methods of staff uniforms, his vision of the ballet, his lighting systems, his projection devices, his whole battery of

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mechanical marvels which are now lodged in his theater.

Sometimes, at interviews these days, he will show a collection of letters from famous persons to him, or letters from unknown persons telling him that they have named the baby Roxy; or he will tell how he arranged the presentation of the Eucharist Congress film by request from a Cardinal, or how he loves to go incognito around town, playing Caliph. Known to millions, with his name famous and loved, Roxy, as a man without intimates, derives a tremendous fillip from extravagantly tipping barbers and waiters who have no knowledge that they have served Samuel Rothafel, the Haroun Al Raschid of Fiftieth Street.

When he begins an account of his career, he starts quietly, calmly. He states that his father was of German peasant stock, that he was disagreeably poor, that he was a bartender, then a Marine and then a baseball player. Somewhat less calmly he explains that in his first movie house the undertaker removed the 250 chairs whenever the town had a good funeral. The recital moves on to theaters in Minneapolis, and so to New

## **R o x y**

York, where he took up the managership of the Strand, the Rialto, the Rivoli, and the Capitol in succession, of his accomplishments in presentation, of his radio work, and of his public. Gradually through this truthful aria grows a marveling at himself until the words take on magnificence, the adjectives are epic. In his description he rides in a skyscraper elevator to the tower of his career, the Roxy Theater. When he looks down he thrills at the street floor start.

Every day when the Roxy Theater, now called simply "The Cathedral of the Motion Picture", was in building-process, Roxy was driven there in his town car. Under lathings, through all the roar of hammers, over planks and plaster moldings, he crawled to steep himself in his pleasure. He scrambled to the rim of the auditorium, to the great stage where he could admire the orchestra's spaciousness. When he first took the reticent Arthur Hopkins there, Hopkins gazed for a while silently, taking in the vastness of the musicians' pit.

"Be careful, Roxy," advised Hopkins. "Shuberts will want to build a theater there."

From the stage Rothafel escorted him to

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the top floor, through the hospital ward to the executive offices, the red and bronze lobby, the secretary's room, the library, the kitchenette, and the simply magnificent shower room. They came to another room, but Roxy, master of a building which would hold 10,000 persons, could not remember its purpose.

"That is for your assistant," supplied the builder's helper.

"I am going, now, to have two assistants," said Roxy, with dignity, as became a man whose office, the blue prints showed, would have stained glass windows.

Built on the foundation of the personality of Samuel Rothafel, the Roxy Theater is, of course, a sponge of sentiment. At the slightest touch everything dissolves into outpourings of humanitarianism. Not even the ushers escape, for in each issue of the program this proclamation is inserted:

"We, the attaches of the Roxy Theater, earnestly request our patrons to kindly refrain from offering gratuities for any service rendered.

"We regard the Roxy Theater as a university and place ourselves in the position of

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students seeking better understanding and appreciation of the theater arts.

“Patrons of the theater are our guests and we place ourselves in the position of hosts.

“Being associated with Mr. Rothafel is a distinct privilege and pleasure that we feel is sufficient remuneration.”

That gush directly emanates from the beautifully proportioned room where sits the man whose flare for plaintiveness brought into that theater, in its first two days, 51,513 paying patrons. There is Roxy, suffering profitable sentiment to flow through him as though his veins were as hollow as macaroni.

THE END















